



JOHN MARTIN,
Pastor of the Church?
Meeting at
KEPPEL STREET,
LONDON.



JOHN MARTIN,
Pastor of the Church?
Meeting at
KEPPEL STREET,
LONDON.

T H O U G H T S

O N T H E

D U T Y O F M A N

R E L A T I V E T O

FAITH IN *JESUS CHRIST*;

I N W H I C H

MR. FULLER's leading Propositions on that
Subject are considered, and his additional Remarks
examined.

By J O H N M A R T I N.

Of all the opponents I have had, none have been so AMUSING to me as Mr. Martin.

It is almost impossible to be out of temper with him — The whole of what I plead
for, is included in Mr. Martin's favourite word endeavour. Mr. FULLER.

Suffer me that I may speak; and after that I have spoken, mock on. JOB.

P A R T II.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED BY W. SMITH, KING-STREET, SEVEN-DIALS;

AND SOLD BY Mr. BUCKLAND, PATER-NOSTER-ROW; Mr. BUTTON
NEWINGTON CAUSEY; Mr. GARDINER, IN THE STRAND; AND Mr.
GARDINER, OXFORD STREET; Mr. REYNOLDS, CROOKED LANE
AND Mr. MURRAY, PRINCES-STREET, SOHO.

M DCC.LXXXIX.

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

OF THE

DUTY OF

PARLIAMENTS

IN THE

REVENUE

AND

FINANCE



BY

THE

PRINTED

BY

JOHN

JOHN

JOHN

JOHN

JOHN

JOHN

JOHN

THOUGHTS

ON THE

DUTY of MAN, &c.

PART II.

DIFFERENT VIEWS OF THE DUTY OF MAN
STATED AND DEFENDED.

SECT I.

General idea of the Duty of Man.

IT is possible to disagree without indulging
disingenuous suspicions, or giving way to
illiberal abuse. To carry on this controversy in
a becoming temper, it is proposed to forbear an
examination of Mr. Fuller's remarks in this and
in the following section; and in the last, where
they must be considered, to treat him with real
respect.

In stating my general idea of the duty of man, how far that agrees with Mr. Fuller's judgment, or differs from it, every reader may determine for himself. If our dispute be merely verbal, any thing may be so called ; but if it be something more, yet our friends cannot be offended to perceive that we both of us hold as sacred, several sentiments of confessed importance.

A general idea of our duty may be obtained by observing what is the *rule* of moral obligation, what is the leading *motive* which induces us to regard it, and in what *manner* we should always attempt to be obedient,

I. The *rule* of moral obligation is the preceptive will of God.

For what saith the scripture? " The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them ; he shined forth from Mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints ; from his right hand went a fiery law *for them*. Yea, he loved the people ; all his saints are in thy hand, and they sat down at thy feet : every one shall receive of thy *words*."—That do [which is] after the *will* of your God. Ye shall not *add* unto the word which I command you, neither shall you *diminish* ought from it, that ye may keep the *commandments of the Lord your God* which I command you.—I have stuck unto thy *testimonies* : O Lord, put me not to shame. I will run the way of thy *commandments*, when thou shalt enlarge my

my heart.—Teach me to do thy *will*; for thou art my God.—Ye shall walk after the Lord your God, and fear him, and keep his *commandments*, and obey his voice, and you shall serve him, and cleave unto him.—Wherefore, be not unwise, but understanding what the *will* of the Lord is. But be ye transformed, by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable and perfect *will* of God.—As servants of Christ, doing the *will* of God from the heart.—The world passeth away and the lust thereof; but he that doth the *will* of God abideth ever.—Whosoever shall do the *will* of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.—Now the God of peace make you perfect in every good work, to do his will!”

Thus it is written; and men of great abilities, and of different complexions amongst us, have clearly understood, and openly acknowledged the *will* of God to be the rule of human duty. It may be proper to produce some proof of this assertion.

Bp. CONYBEARE: “As the notion of the religion of nature considered as a religion, must refer us to God, the author and object of it, so the notion of the law of nature, considered as a law, must refer us to some superior, the author of this law, and from whose *will*, directed by wisdom and goodness, and supported by power,

all obligation, strictly and properly so called, must be derived.—The law of nature, then, is to us a law, because it is and must be the *will* of God.” [Defence of Revealed Religion, 2d edit. chap. I.]

Bp. WARBURTON: “ Nothing can oblige but a superior will: and such a will could not be found till the being and attributes of God were established; but was discovered with them.—Hence arose, and only from hence, a moral difference. From this time, human actions became the subject of obligation, and not till now: For though instinct perceived a difference in actions, and reason discovered that difference to be founded in the nature of things, yet it was *will* only, that could make a compliance with that difference a duty.—For till it be made appear, that man hath received his being from the will of another, and so depending on that other, is accountable to him for it, he can be under no *moral* obligation to prefer good to evil, or even life to death.” [Divine Legation, Book I. § 4.]

Mr. BOTT wrote against Warburton's notion of morality; yet he has left us this concession: “ Duty, in its constant use implies submission to the *will* of a superior: For which reason” he observes, “ we never speak of the duty of God; who has, and can have no superior.” [Answer to the Rev. Mr. Warburton's Divine Legation, p. 234.]

Mr.

Mr. PALEY: " All obligation is nothing more than inducement of sufficient strength, and resulting, in some way from the command of another.—As the *will* of God is our rule, to inquire what is our duty, or what we are obliged to do, in any instance, is, in effect, to inquire what is the *will* of God in that instance."—Mr. Paley justly observes, that " such as reject the christian religion are to make the best shift they can to build up a system, and to lay the foundation of morality without it. But" he adds, " it appears to me a greater inconsistency in those who receive christianity, and expect something to come of it, to endeavour to keep all such expectations out of sight in their reasonings concerning human duty." [Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy, vol. I. chap. 3. 4.]

What some writers may think of Mr. Paley's remark cannot be told: we wish, however, it may be long recollected, and that it may be of lasting service to the professors of christianity.

Dr. GILL: " If the production of creatures into being is owing to the will of God, and follows upon it; if the several relations they stand in to one another are solely of his appointment and forming, then surely, what is fit, or not fit to be done, in such a situation, must be fixed by, and be the result of his *own will*, as determining them according to the perfections of his nature; which determination of his secret will being re-

vealed, becomes the *law* of his creatures; and being so, this law is the surest rule of judgment unto them with respect to the difference of moral good and evil; it lays the strongest obligation upon them to do the one and avoid the other, and so must be the best rule of action unto them."

[The Moral Nature and Fitness of Things considered, p. 13, 14.]

Of all the modern advocates for what is commonly called The Nature and Fitness of Things, perhaps, the late Rev. Mr. Balguy was the best: But the best advocate can only *seem* to make a bad cause a good one. But of the *rule* of our duty enough has now been quoted: yet the danger is so great when that honour is transfered to the Nature and Fitness of Things, and to various other rules of modern and of antient manufacture, that the pious reader will not be offended at the preceding quotations.

When we seriously reflect on the dignity of personality, (dignity that depravity does not annihilate, nor even torment itself destroy!) how is it possible to suppose that any thing but *will*, directed by wisdom and goodness, and supported by power, can be the proper source of personal obligation? They ~~who~~ who have rightly regarded that rule have been truly majestic. Peter and John were full of dignity when to rulers, elders, and scribes, they said, " Whether it be right in
the

the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye."

Things, whether tremendous or pleasing, are ever under the absolute dominion of him that made them. So are we, but in a *manner* they are not. We may shudder at the approach of thunder, tremble at its flaming attendant, be alarmed at the prospect of a tempest, or be terrified at the apprehension of an earthquake, but we cannot treat these things with religious reverence. Such homage we pay to him alone, " Whose hand the lightning forms ; who heaves old ocean, and who wings the storms." Whether chastised or blessed, it is still the same. For it is the same hand which corrects and feeds us ; and to it the eye of the believer is devoutly turned. He knows who it is that says, " I will affect or act upon the heavens, and they shall affect the earth, and the earth shall affect the corn, and the wine, and the oil, and they shall affect Jezreel."—In short, he that has a *will* can bow to nothing that has not, and he that has understanding can reverence nothing that is destitute of intellectual ability.

II. The leading *motive* which induces us to regard the will of God, as the rule of our duty is next to be examined.

The result of repeated examination on this subject, in reference to myself, may be thus ex-

pressed. I find in all my serious attempts to regard the preceptive will of God as the rule of my duty, there has been a secret and settled persuasion that it is law; and that it is so, because it is the will of the Supreme, and worthy of himself as holy, just and good. I therefore conclude it is good for me, being what I am; that as a rule it is always and altogether good, and indeed so excellent as to be incomparable: and I have observed, the more clearly this truth is perceived, the more constantly it is recollected, and the more carefully it is contrasted with any, or with every opposing sentiment, it has been followed with very sensible advantage.

It is not easy to speak of motives with precision so as to be immediately understood; and the prejudice in favour of what some are pleased to call simplicity, is very great; but in many things perhaps injurious. Genuine simplicity is undoubtedly a charming thing; yet it has its limits, and it has its counterfeits too. He, therefore, who is impatient of difficulty, who is disgusted with argument, who is unwilling to attend to close investigation, and who fancies that every thing that is excellent must be easy, is liable to shocking impositions. If the following remarks on motives be obscure, my friends tell me it is a kind of obscurity which the nature of the subject will excuse; and they think that such remarks ought not to be omitted.

A motive is that by which we move; or that, by which we are determined to this, rather than to that; or by which, at different periods, we are moved to both. " If the will be determined there is a determiner." And if it be by motive, " It is that motive, which, as it stands in the view of the mind, is the strongest, that determines the will." So says Mr. Jonathan Edwards; who by motive, " means the whole of that which moves, excites or invites the mind to volition, whether that be one thing singly, or many things conjunctly." He also remarks, with equal propriety, " Many particular things may concur and unite their strength to induce the mind; and when it is so, altogether are, as it were, one complex motive."—A gentleman for aught I know of equal metaphysical sagacity, has observed, " The final cause [of action] we commonly stile *motive*, by a metaphor taken from mechanical engines, which cannot play without some spring or other mover to set them at work: and because we find action usually follows upon the suggestion of proper motives, therefore we conceive them moving the mind to exert itself." This gentleman supposes, " that motives do not move the mind as one billiard ball moves another upon their striking: but only that motives give occasion to the mind to exert her endeavours in attaining whatever they invite her to, which she does by her own inherent activity, and not by

A 6

any

any power derived from them." He likewise asserts, " A motive is the prospect of some end actually in view of the mind at the time of action and urging to attain it."

Now, if these remarks be admitted, it will follow, that he who does not *perceive* the rule of action, can have no motive, *for* disposition to regard it; that when he does perceive it, unless he is persuaded it is, upon the whole, *better* for him to be obedient than to be disobedient, or than to be in a state of hesitation, he can have no proper inducement to regard that rule; and we may add, that when any man's motive is commendable, it cannot operate as a motive any longer than while it is present to his mind, with some degree of satisfaction. Weights are called weights whether they are in the box, or in the scale; and springs are called springs, as well when they are laid aside, as when they are so placed as to put the machine in motion: so motives, are called motives, when they cease to move us, or to be the mean and end of motion. But a man may be rich in arguments who is poor in motives; just as a man may possess a clear understanding whose appetites are corrupt, and whose will is remarkably perverse.

Of the strength or weight of our motives, we may observe, that is always relative: for what are commonly called the *same* motives, do not, in every situation, move our minds in the
same

same manner. Nothing can move the mind of man which is not present with it. " Nothing can induce or invite the mind to will or act any thing, any further than it is perceived, or is some way or other in the mind's view, for what is wholly unperceived, and perfectly out of the mind's view, cannot affect the mind at all. 'Tis most evident, that nothing is in the mind, or reaches it, or takes any hold of it, any otherwise than as it is perceived or thought of." This must be allowed; but when the mind thus moves, the strongest motive, (as Mr. Edwards has observed,) only " operates to induce to a *particular* act of volition." One act of the will may succeed another in swift succession; but without continual inducement we can neither will nor act. If a man stretches out his arm, he has some inducement to that exertion of will and power; so long as that, or some other motive to stretch out his arm is present and prevalent, his volitions multiply rapidly and almost insensibly; thus moved, he endeavours to keep his arm still extended; but as inducement decays, or is counteracted, his arm alters its position, and is either bent, or falls negligently by his side, as different motives affect his mental and his active powers.

Such trains of thought in the warmth of action, and tumult of temptation, cannot be indulged; yet they are not to be despised. For if, on consulting the pillow, it seems to us we have acted improperly,

improperly, it may be observed that conclusion always runs on this principle, that we have done something which is supposed to be inconsistent with the will of God. But of that rule of action, there are different degrees of knowledge; and as it advances, and is settled, it is probable, that both in the bustle of action, and in the calm of retirement, we shall more quickly and fully discover our deviations from his unerring will.

What further apology can I make for such unpopular remarks? Permit me to say, "If some sophisters have treated metaphysical disquisitions, in such a manner that one would swear they aimed at nothing else but to vex and torture the understanding with difficult trifles, and to infect all language with blundering nonsense, and with the grating horror of barbarous sounds which have no meaning, yet men of piety and sense have availed themselves of that science to very valuable purposes."—"If the reasoning be good, 'tis as frivolous to enquire what science it is properly reduced to, as what language it is delivered in: and for a man to go about to confute the arguments of his opponent, by telling him his arguments are *metaphysical*, would be as weak as to tell him, his arguments could not be substantial, because they were written in *French* or *Latin*. The question is not, whether what is said be *mathematicks*, *Latin*, *French*, *English*, or *Mohawk*? But, whether the reasoning be good, and

and the arguments truly conclusive." Mr. Edwards in his Careful and strict Inquiry into the *modern* prevailing Notions of that Freedom of the Will which is supposed to be essential to moral Agency, Virtue and Vice, Reward and Punishment, Praise and Blame, from which the preceding observations are quoted, has much to the same purpose. He affirms, " it is by metaphysical arguments only, we are able to prove that the rational soul is not corporeal ; that lead or sand can't think, that thoughts are not square or round, or do not weigh a pound ; that we can demonstrate that God is not limited to a place, or is not mutable ; that he is not ignorant, or forgetful ; that it is impossible for him to lie, or be unjust ; and that there is one God only, and not hundreds, or thousands : " nay he affirms, " we have no strict demonstration of any thing, excepting mathematical truths, but by metaphysics."

A more modern and elegant writer, (though not equally serious nor consistent) has this remark: " I am no less surprized at Mr. Knox's precipitate censure of metaphysics: and I desire to ask this gentleman how he can strictly and properly demonstrate any proposition that relates to the Being of God—the dependence of his creatures—the nature of our souls—the truths of natural religion, &c. &c. but by metaphysics? If he deny us the assistance of metaphysical argument,

we

we must withdraw our attention from some of the most elegant, most useful disquisitions in the theory of science. But notwithstanding the levity of a frivolous age, I trust that *real knowledge* will be safe by its solidity; and that the ponderous erudition of Aristotle will be had in reverence, when the fugitive trifles of a modern essay, like Gallic Balloons, will mount by their lightness and be lost in the regions of oblivion."

For my own part, I *now* suspect that I do not always know what is, or is not metaphysical; and I am therefore resolved, never to speak against it again, till I better understand the subject: and then, perhaps, I shall not have any inclination.

III. Let us next consider in what *manner* we should attempt to regard the rule of our duty in our present situation.

Here it is of great consequence to recollect what we really are; since if we forget it, or deny it, if we suppose ourselves to be either better or worse, the conclusion must affect our behaviour. When the sons of Zebedee requested the highest honours, Jesus said, "Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am to be baptized with? They say unto him, we are able." But how ridiculous was this precipitate pretension?—On another occasion, our Lord asked his disciples, "Which of you, intending to

to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he hath sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it, begin to mock him, saying this man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand, to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an embassage, and desireth conditions of peace."

Every one sees the good sense which is here recommended, and which, in common life, is both approved and followed. Why, then, are we so reluctant to sit down and count the cost when we are going to build for eternity; and why are we so unwilling to request conditions of peace by that blood which speaketh better things than that of Abel's, that our building may be erected safely, and fixed upon a foundation which shall never fail? But, alas! instead of being taught to give proper attention to the consequence of his disobedience, by which many were made finners, and to act accordingly, we are urged to consider what we *ought* to do, and what we *might* do if we *would*, and to believe, that were we thoroughly willing, there is yet some hope even in Babylon, of building "a city and a tower

tower whose top may reach unto heaven." In short, modern extravagance is so like antient folly, that it may be described by the same terms. Of both it may be said, " And this they begin to do ; and now nothing can be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do."

Zeal, however great, if it be not according to knowledge, is as offensive to the unerring judge as indolence. " Israel, which followed the law of righteousness hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore ? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law : for they stumbled at that stumbling stone ; as it is written, " Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling stone, and rock of offence ; but whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." This writing, though antient, deserves our best attention. The zeal of Uzzah, in the reign of David, drew down vengeance. David, though a pious king, was offended at it ; but, when better instructed, he said, " The Lord our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after *due order*."

Never are we first in excellence ; never do we take the lead in goodness. God claims that honour to himself. To be *followers* of him is all that grace will admit ; and to that end grace is given. Our sufficiency is always of God ; it should be so ; and he who calls that fact in question, or is displeased with it, will comment
with

with confusion on the sacred text, and will exhort with erring apprehensions.

It is difficult to say what form of speech has been more mismanaged than exhortations. By them, from the first dawning of our understanding, we were taught to think improperly of ourselves; and, indeed, of him in whom we live, and move, and have our being. Yes, erroneous apprehensions of our birth, our condition in life, and the principles of piety, were formed and fixed under what is commonly called religious education. Nor can we wonder at it, since so many teachers, of all denominations, so frequently err in what they are pleased to call practical reflections and devout improvement.—A reverend gentleman, zealous to recommend infant sprinkling to parental, and to pastoral attention, informs us, “that original sin implies at least a privation of some *moral* quality which infants *ought* to possess, and therefore argues them the subjects of a moral state, and of course of moral obligations.” Had not Mr. Fuller been a kind of wholesale dealer in *oughts* himself, and at this time a *little* out of temper, such language from a pædo-baptist, might have made him smile. No, I am disappointed; for though in his recent and *rapid* remarks he says, “A child of ten years old is not supposed to be capable of understanding so much as when he becomes a man of thirty;” though he owns, “nor is a man *obliged* to believe

lieve faster or sooner, than he has the means of obtaining evidence," yet he contends that " both the *child* and the man, are *obliged* to be of such a *disposition* as shall cordially embrace the gospel when it is revealed, and its meaning comes within the reach of their understanding."—In a proper place, what Mr. Fuller may mean by *disposition*, (and whether that term denotes a leading principle of human action, in the sense which he seems to suppose,) will be carefully examined.

But as they who adopt the common method of domestic instruction, may wish to know what to do were they disposed to lay it aside, the following remarks are submitted to their judgment: viz. that our first impressions are frequently deep and lasting; that it ill becomes us to teach without adequate understanding, and that it is better to be silent than to speak at random on serious subjects. That we should consider God *is* good, and not to be made so by our acts or dispositions; that his goodness first affects us, and is the source of real religion; that the scriptures make the only infallible report to us of his favour, and that in all our moral instructions a deviation from the sense of scripture is injurious. This however, might be made familiar: and parents for the instruction of their children, would be well employed in communicating the sense of scripture in that easy, engaging style,

style, in which they so frequently excel. But I am not able, in detail, to direct them how to discharge their duty. Yet I beg leave in general, to recommend to their attention the animating and humbling sentiments of the hundred psalm. It is a prophecy of that mercy which has long since been extended to the Gentiles ; and, of the effects of that favour. The three last verses of that noble psalm run thus : “ Know ye that the Lord, he is God ; it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves ; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise, be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the Lord is good ; his mercy is everlasting : and his truth endureth to all generations.”

It is time we should consider how far we have advanced, lest by going round about, (sometimes to pluck up a weed, and sometimes in quest of something better,) we should lose our way, or forget at least, how far we have travelled.—We have shown, then, that the preceptive will of God is the *rule* of our duty, that satisfaction with this rule as good, is the leading *motive* of approved obedience, and that the *manner* in which we should endeavour to regard it, is, in every instance, to act, not as independents, but as creatures who neither can, nor should accomplish any thing without divine concurrence. We therefore, conclude, that a general idea of our duty may be
thus

thus expressed: It is always our duty to strive by lawful means to know what is the will of God concerning us; and as we obtain that knowledge, to regard it strictly, with religious reverence: He who is not thus employed is self-condemned; and he who is thus occupied, may be conscious that no higher sphere of action can be the lot of humanity. More than this my opponents never attempt to do: nay, Mr. Fuller himself has acknowledged, the whole of what he pleads for is included in the word *endeavour*.

In the preceding pages it will be observed, that moral and religious ideas and actions, are united. This was designed; and if any man can keep them perfectly distinct, to answer any good end, he will do more than has been yet effected. Antient and modern philosophers have made the attempt, but to which of them shall we turn? The best have been consulted with disappointment. In attempting to *divorce* morality from religion, "They have dealt deceitfully as a brook; and as the streams of brooks they pass away. They who looked and waited for them, were confounded, because they had hoped; they came thither and were ashamed." Of this fact, they who need conviction may obtain it, by reading *The Light of Nature Pursued*, by Edward Search, Esq. in which they will find the best sentiments of Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and other antient philosophers, together
with

with the sentiments of Locke and Hartley, and other modern philosophers, on moral and metaphysical subjects. — Who is able to pursue the light of Nature much farther than that penetrating authour? Yet, when it is *divorced* from revelation, as he has shewn, it leads a fallen creature to despair. The pursuer, like him who ventures too near the north pole, advances till light becomes tremendous; because it discovers horrid prospects, regions where the wanderer can never settle, and leaves him without a ray of hope that by still pursuing, he shall ever reach to milder skies.

This section shall be concluded with the following remarks:

I. If it be admitted that the preceptive will of God is the rule of moral and religious action, yet what that rule directs to *in every thing*, is not *knowable* by any man. “ Who can understand his errors?” Who is he, and what, that need not say to the Almighty, “ That which I see not, teach thou me? Teach me thy paths; teach me thy way; teach me thy statutes; teach me thy judgments; teach me to do thy will; shew me wherefore thou contendest with me?” Where does that man dwell, who must not confess he “ knows but in part,” he sees but “ through a glass darkly;” and that he knows not perfectly what he is, or what he shall be?—If this be allowed, it follows, that we are
fallen

fallen creatures; that justification by our own obedience is impossible; that to be proud of our sanctification is intolerable, and that forgiveness with God is the only source of human hope, and the true principle of moral and religious action.

II. Though the rule of moral and religious action is not so thoroughly known, by a fallen creature, that, at any period of his life, his knowledge of that rule, as applied to the whole of his own conduct, is *infallible*; yet our labour is not in vain in the Lord. He that said, "Occupy till I come;" likewise said of the slothful servant, "Take from him the pound, and give it to him who hath ten pounds.—For, I say unto you, That unto every one which hath, [occupied,] shall be given: and from him that hath not, [occupied,] even that he hath, [in possession,] shall be taken away from him."

III. To make what is commonly called the moral law, the *only* rule of religious action, in the *manner* that some do, is inaccurate, and it is perplexing to the minds of men. It seems much more proper to say, that the preceptive will of God is the rule of such action.—But it is said, all law is derived from, and contained in the moral law; and that the whole decalogue, is contained in two precepts; namely, love to God and man. But what that law may contain is one thing, and what we can learn from it alone, is another

another. All law is of God. He is the fountain of it, and both our lawgiver and our judge. He gave his antient people different laws by Moses: speaking "at sundry times, and in divers manners." Nor would it become us at all to say, that the second law was a mere exposition of the first, or that the third, was nothing more than an explanation of the second. Let any man who has read with care the twentieth chapter of Exodus, read with equal care the twenty-first and twenty-second, and, if he has leisure, let him read also the whole book of Deuteronomy, and seriously consider, whether he should ever thought of so expounding the ten commandments. To which of the ten, for instance, would he reduce these words? "If a birds nest be before thee in the way in any tree, or on the ground, whether they be young ones or eggs, thou shalt not take the dam with the young: but thou shalt in any wise let the dam go, and take the young to thee; that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days."—"When thou shalt vow a vow unto the Lord thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the Lord thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee. But if thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee."

Who is so skilled in the art of reduction as to bring back these precepts with precision, and many more which might be mentioned, to any

one of the ten commandments: nay, why should we be perplexed with such a proposition? The preceptive will of God, in its true and relative meaning, is law wheresoever it may be found, and that is enough for them who wish to be obedient.

It will perhaps, be said, we are not now at Mount Sinai. This, with gratitude, is admitted. But if we are not there, why are we ever treated worse than if we were? The law was then given after the passover had been slain and received, after the people had been delivered from the house of bondage, and was given also by a mediator: but now, we too frequently hear the moral law so stated, and so urged, that what Paul said of some jewish zealots, is much more applicable to certain modern expositors than a benevolent mind could wish. The words alluded to are these; "Desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm."

When the moral law is said to be the *only* rule of life, the meaning must be, it is so, as expounded by some Commentator, or without such exposition. If without the aid of an expositor, then, every man's unassisted apprehension of that law must be, to himself, his rule of life; and if so, he must either endeavour to follow the letter of that law, or to pursue what he conjectures it may virtually contain. To contend
rigidly

rigidly for the *letter* of the law, would be severely to censure those who have attempted to expound the ten commandments; and it would be applauding those transgressors which St. Paul ^a reproved: but it would ill become those persons to do this who think it right to give up the jewish sabbath, and to keep what is properly called, the Lord's day. On the other hand, to contend for what the law is supposed *virtually* to contain, this, will certainly introduce expositions; which, we know, must be the work of expositors: that is to say, of men of like passions with ourselves. But which amongst them are we to follow? Dod and Cleaver? Mr. John Wesley, or Doctor Gill? The authours who are quoted in Pool's *Synopsis*, or those which are mentioned in the *Critica Sacra*? Or are we to ascend into the higher regions of antiquity, or to descend to the hackneyed and tritcal remarks of yesterday.

Will it be objected, that a deist might multiply such questions? It is allowed he might: but certainly not to answer the same end. For the object now in view, is to make it evident, that "Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of *any* law of God, given as a rule to the reasonable creature;" The assembly of divines, formerly meeting at Westminster, gave us that definition of sin which has now been

B 2

quoted;

^a Rom. ii. 27.

quoted; and it was worthy of them: but to infer from it, that it is our duty to be holy without divine concurrence, and previous to such assistance, seems to be an inference propt up with pious pretences, and to be as illusive as it is anti-evangelical.

IV. If it be both inaccurate and perplexing to make the moral law the *only* rule of life, it is yet more perplexing, and dangerous too, to preach it chiefly, or as if the gospel was subservient to that law; when in truth, all law, since the fall of Adam, is made subservient to the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are plainly told, the “law was *added*, because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made;” and that it was “ordained by angels, in the hand of a mediator.” We are also informed, even by Moses, that the law given to Israel at Sinai was *for them*; which the decalogue, abstractedly considered, could not possibly be: since by that view of it, the offence abounded, and the people could not endure what was commanded; and so terrible was the sight, when that law was given, that Moses said, “I exceedingly fear and quake.”—Moreover, it may be observed, that Moses frequently speaks of the body of the divine laws published by him, (which were not to be *divorced* and rent asunder

asunder,) as closely connected with the deliverance of Israel from Egypt; and, as a *body* of laws, peculiar to themselves. So we are taught by the following declarations: "And God spake *all* these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me."—Thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee thence: *therefore*, I command thee to do this thing." At the close of the book of Leviticus we read, "These are the statutes and judgments and laws, which the Lord made between him and the children of Israel in mount Sinai by the hand of Moses:" and in the last verse of that book it is said, "These are the commandments which the Lord commanded Moses for the children of Israel, in mount Sinai:" and long after his days, David made this grateful acknowledgement, "He hath shewed his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation; and as for his judgments they have not known them. Praise ye the Lord."

Should any person, on reading this, exclaim, 'So, then, unless we are redeemed, we are not, it seems under the moral law!' such an exclamation would be immature: because what

has been said tends only to prove, that no man, since what is commonly called the fall, was ever under the law abstractedly considered by any external dispensation of divine government; though perhaps many have in the dispositions of their own heart. God will be known to fallen creatures as the God of grace: and every thing from him, however it may be perverted by us, is subservient to that idea. But then, he " will be gracious to whom he will be gracious, and will shew mercy to whom he will shew mercy." Though the jews were a peculiar people; yet God left not himself without witness of his compassion and kindness in any nation. As for us, now in Great Britain, surely, he must be very inattentive to the nature and number of our mercies, or very unthankful for them, who does not think it more eligible to live in this country than to have lived in the waste howling wilderness with Moses, or to have lived at Jerusalem in any period of the legal dispensation.

But wheresoever we live in this world, it is certain the law is made by the Lawgiver himself, subservient to the gospel. All of us indeed, deserve to die as transgressors; for continued transgression, daily committed, there is no excuse; nevertheless, for disobedience there is no remedy, and over corruption there is no victory, but by faith in Jesus Christ. Salvation is of faith
that

that it might be by grace, that the promise might be sure to all the seed: we cannot therefore, but conclude, that every attempt to make men moral or holy, without any hope of salvation, or to give them any hope of that, without being religious, or of being religious, without believing in our Lord Jesus Christ, or of being believers in him unto salvation, without distinguishing grace, is an attempt which is at once illicit, impotent and in vain.

S E C T. II.

Leading Articles of religious Obligation.

AS this treatise is written to promote that piety which is possible to be performed, the principles on which it rests, and the union which is here formed between moral and religious action, always keeps that end in view.

In practical piety, there must not only be a rule of action, and motives to regard it, but those means, and those succours also, which may lead the believer to prefer the preceptive will of God concerning him to every other rule of life. Nothing is possible to us, in the whole extent of duty, without divine concurrence: therefore, in every thing which can be so called, it becomes every man that would be obedient to say, this will I do, provided the Lord is pleased to grant me his assistance.

When Caleb asked for his inheritance, then in the hands of the Anakims, he said to Joshua, "If so be the Lord will be with me, then shall I be able to drive them out, as the Lord hath said." Joshua well understood this hypothetical assertion; for, in all his conquests, he obtained
victory

victory on that belief. He went forth to subdue the land of Canaan with this promise: "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so will I be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee: Be strong, and of good courage." As he went forth, so he finished his course; for when that servant of the Lord drew near his death, thus he took his leave of Israel: "The Lord hath driven out from before you great nations and strong:—take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the Lord your God."

The inspired writers were very careful to keep up these animating and humbling ideas. Moses said, "Hear, O Israel: Thou art to pass over Jordan this day, to go in to possess nations greater and mightier than thyself; cities great and fenced up to heaven; a people great and tall, the children of the Anakims, whom thou knowest, and of whom thou hast heard say, Who can stand before the children of Anak! Understand therefore this day, that the Lord thy God is he which goeth over before thee, as a consuming fire: *he* shall utterly destroy them, and *he* shall bring them down before thy face: *so* shalt thou drive them out and destroy them quickly, *as* the Lord thy God hath said unto thee."

And thus it was that Israel actually obtained the promised possession: "For (as David devoutly acknowledged,) they got not the land in

possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them."

These important lessons are strangely overlooked by some, in favour of a distinction too highly valued, and too little understood. You do not, say our opponents, distinguish between natural and moral ability. We reply, you do not sufficiently consider the close connection which subsists between the limited and dependent powers of man; nor do you always recollect how you are disposed, on certain occasions, to represent the *total* inability of fallen creatures.

Permit us, for a moment, to ask, whether our invisible enemies are, in no respect, *greater* and *mightier* than we? If they are, favour us with a solution of this question, How are we, in our own strength, to be victorious? It is said indeed, "Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you." But from whom does Satan flee? The graceless and the proud? No; but from the humble, to whom God is pleased to give "more grace": and he flees from them, not merely because they resist him, but because the Lord is pleased to *rebuke* their adversary. If Satan flees from a polluted worm, it is because the Almighty has said "Fear thou not, for I am with thee: be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee, yea I will help thee, yea I will uphold thee, with the right hand of my righteousness.—Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men

men of Israel: I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy redeemer, the holy one of Israel."

To shew that no action of ours is less laudable when we are animated by such promises, and walk by faith, (being strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might,) is a task that no man of ability need blush to undertake. But such disquisitions, were we able to pursue them, must, at present, be declined. Having believed, we speak: satisfied that the credibility of this part of our creed will bear the crucible of critical inspection.—But the leading articles of religious obligation are now to be considered. To know what they are, depends on a question seldom agitated in the schools, and but rarely pursued, even in the pulpit. *What is the religion of a sinful creature?* is the important question. For, if "by nature we are the children of wrath, even as others;" if, though partakers of grace, we are yet in such a situation as ever to have reason to say, "Forgive us our debts," (which is on both sides admitted,) it follows, we are so "shut up," that unless we may be religious while "encompassed about with infirmities, there is no possibility of our being religious in "this present evil world."

The absolute dependance of a creature on God is the root of all religion. For, as a creature cannot have any thing but what he has from his Maker and Preserver; as he cannot ever act without

him, it follows, *all* that such a being has, (in that *manner* which God is pleased to direct) should be devoted to him. The first wish of a creature to act independently of his Maker, was mischievous madness; and every wish of ours to be completely independent, is of the same complexion. That which leads to such a wish, may be considered as the *prōton pseudos* of error in religion.—We yet “err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.”

Of the religion of innocence we know nothing by experience; nor can we expect we ever shall: for in heaven, the ransomed of the Lord will say, “Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God, and his father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.” As therefore, our religion must ever be the religion of them who forget not they have sinned, nor by whom they are redeemed; and as our religion, at present, if we have any, must be constantly connected with confession of sin, and hope of forgiveness with God, the question that has been proposed, is, to us, a question of considerable importance. Let us be thankful, we may ask it without being too much dejected: For though “the law entered that the offence might abound, yet,” we are assured, “where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.”

When

When the nature and the consequences of our fall are properly considered, we are compelled to conclude, that a sinful creature can have no religion which yields him satisfaction without the hope of salvation; and we are certain, without a Saviour, he can have no such hope; but must either languish in despair, or endeavour to content himself with something that is delusive. This conclusion is affecting; but that which affects us, we survey with deep attention. We consider whether the affecting object be desirable and possible to be obtained. If it seem to us desirable, but at the same time, absolutely out of our reach, we are driven to despair: but if it appears to us possible to be enjoyed, that view of the agreeable object produces hope; and hope animates to that action which it alone excites: for every distinct affection of the mind has its proper and peculiar force on our active powers. As we cannot however obtain any thing without the use of means, we next consider *how* that object on which our mind is fixed may be obtained; whether by any independent efforts of our own, or only by the favour of another. If it can be obtained only by the favour of another person, the question then is, whether we are disposed to be supplicants for his assistance, and are willing to submit to the consequences of ingenuous, and, if the case require it, of repeated solicitation. If we are not, the object
desired,

desired, was only desired on condition it might be obtained by some other way than this; it therefore, keeps its distance from us; but when the only way in which we can succeed meets with our cordial approbation, we may be confident that way will be instantly regarded, and surrounding obstructions will, if it be possible, overcome.

Now, if salvation is, in truth, our object, and we perceive that “with man *it* is impossible,” and are persuaded, “with God all things are possible,” then the nature of salvation, the manner in which it is to be enjoyed, and the end and evidence of such felicity, will occupy our most serious meditations. Many who have been thus occupied have been thoroughly convinced, that the stone which was set at nought by the jewish builders, is become the head of the corner; that neither is there salvation in any other; and that salvation is not to be enjoyed, even in Jesus Christ, but by the energy and grace of the Holy Ghost. Without him no man can call Jesus Lord; without him, believers themselves cannot mortify one corruption.

Of these sentiments is the writer of these pages; and on these principles, which appear to him both certain and safe, he ventures to say, that the leading articles of religious obligation are, Attention to the word of God and prayer, with our best efforts to possess and keep a single eye, and to pursue that path to which it may
direct

direct us; and, to do this in the whole course of our religious conduct, without turning aside either to the right hand, or to the left.

It has been proved, that the preceptive will of God is the rule of moral and of religious action. But where can we so soon, or so well, expect to discover what is his will concerning us, as in his word? Not to say how much must ever be unknown without it. To that therefore, our attention must be turned, if we mean to be religious. Yet that very word informs us, we are not only called upon to "search the scriptures," but also to "lift up our voice for understanding." It assures us, "the inspiration of the Almighty giveth understanding;" that he hath "shewed us what is good, and that he alone putteth wisdom in the inward parts." If so, not any attention of ours to that which God hath shewed us in his word, can supersede the necessity of prayer. But when these duties are united, all our diligence and devotion must be disgraced, unless we possess a single eye; and that would be imparted to a poor purpose, if we did not attempt to pursue that path to which it leads us. That path, the whole of things considered, is always best; but if it be, to turn aside from it, must be without excuse.

What the leading articles of religious obligation are, in our opinion, and why they are so called, has now been plainly told. But if the
reader

reader prefers a different arrangement, or wishes to multiply the number of these articles, he is welcome; should he however, suspect from any thing which he may meet with in these Thoughts on the Duty of Man, that he who wrote them imagines any want of conformity to the will of God is innocent, or harmless, he may be assured such suspicion is, in truth, as groundless as his heart could wish. The negative idea of our not being holy, with the blame and misery attending it, without the least exception, is neither opposed, found fault with, or extenuated, in this performance: but the inference, that therefore, we ought, being sinful, to be holy, by some act of ours, previous to any gracious operation of the Almighty, this positive idea is thought to be both preposterous and pernicious; and as such, it is here attempted to be overthrown.

To guard, with additional care, against misapprehension, let us distinctly re-consider what has been called the leading articles of religious obligation, in that order in which they have been already introduced.

I. *Attention to the word of God.*

That there is a book called the bible, that it contains a narrative of many things of very great importance to us, not knowable by any other medium; that it is directed to the sons of
men.

men; that those men who have been most rational, have, in all ages, admitted that the bible contains those precepts and those promises, which are truly divine, every man of good sense, who is tolerably impartial, must acknowledge.—On the contrary, who can disprove the credibility of that revelation, or prove it has not been a blessing to every believer? With such views of the bible, every man who has them is obliged to treat it with reverence.—But these views may vary, or they may not exist. It may be so; yet every view of this object, or of any other, and indeed the want of discernment as well as the power of perception, has its own cause, and it has also its own consequence: he who weighs this fact with skill, will derive no excuse from it to gratify a trifling temper, or to indulge a sensual disposition.

When, however, the bible is read with reverence, he who so reads it, either fears he is yet destitute of the grace of God, or he thinks he is possessed of such favour, or he is doubtful what is his real situation. If he is doubtful, he should consider that many are left without any doubt of their being destitute of distinguishing grace. If he concludes he is possessed of nothing more than a moderate share of rationality, still, how valuable is that gift! how many have it not! and, by whose power was it imparted, and is it yet preserved? But, while he thus reads, and thus reflects

reflects, if the bible informs him of a supernatural power, and assures him that the salvation of a sinner can not be enjoyed without it; if his bible also informs him, that this power is freely extended to men of every description, "without money, and without price," would there be any *reason* why he should be offended with those declarations?

After all, since our best attention to the word of God is never carried by us, beyond our efforts to understand it, and to submit to its injunctions; (which endeavours God crowns with success, or withholds that blessing from us, as it seems good in his sight;) since this is that fact which every sober man admits, how rash would it be to read the word of God without prayer? but who dare pray for promised assistance, that does not endeavour to read both the law and the gospel with reverence, with circumspection, and with a wish to derive advantage? We see, then, that these two duties are inseparably connected. Having considered the first, let us now glance at the second.

II. *Attention to prayer.*

Prayer, from the preceding paragraph, seems to be essential to our edification. Where can be the wonder? Every creature is necessarily, and always, dependent: for he who is now a creature, once was not. His very being is entirely
owing

owing to the will of him that formed him; and his first appearance in life, his condition in it, and his continued preservation, are, every moment, suspended on his Maker's pleasure. This is the state of every creature without exception; but in this world, the whole host of creatures are not only dependent on the Almighty, but in a state of perpetual dependence on each other. We see no kind of inhabitants in this world superiour to ourselves; but on what do we walk, or feed? In what medium do we see, or breathe? On what materials do we labour, and how many are they who must labour daily to support us? Can any man ask these questions and be insensible of his situation as he is a creature? Can any man be wholly ignorant of his additional ground for being subject to God who owns himself to be a sinful creature? Who can unite these ideas and not confess the propriety of saying to the Almighty, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"

Prayer is founded on a sense of our wants, and on belief of the grace of God to supply them. Why should that man pray, "if such a man there be," who is not sensible of any want, or who concludes he is so sufficient for himself as not to need divine assistance? If, on the contrary, any man perceives he wants that good which he is utterly unable to procure, or to deserve, he is allowed to ask it of God: provided he is willing

willing to seek it entirely as a favour, which God may withhold without injustice, and which if he bestows, the suppliant is not to consume upon his lusts. Nobody can possibly pray for that which, in his own opinion, is not in some respect good, but to that which is good, a transgressor can have no claim: he therefore, that prays for intellectual, or for spiritual good, prays for that which it is neither possible, nor proper, he should be able to confer upon himself.

The importance of prayer, in the apprehension of the apostles, may be collected from their conduct on the choice of deacons. For when they were first chosen in Jerusalem, they said, "look ye out among you, seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost, and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word." From this resolution we may infer, that they considered the word which they were to minister, as the basis of their profession. On it they meditated, and to the sacred text they gave themselves up, without reserve, that their profiting might appear to all. But conscious of human imperfection, and fully persuaded that all their sufficiency was of God, they not only read the old testament with caution, and considered its scope with circumspection, and in what manner the gospel might be preached

preached with propriety, but continued instant in prayer, that they might be found able ministers of the gospel, workmen not needing to be ashamed.

It is true, we are not apostles, nor too much like them; but if *they* acted in this manner, though the first-rate ministers of Jesus Christ, can any man think himself exempted from such circumspection and from such devotion, who wishes to enjoy their comments on the old testament, or who wishes to be edified by their testimony in the new? Surely, that book which contains the whole of every thing which is peculiar to christianity, should be carefully consulted by every man who wishes to be a christian; and, if in that book he should be told that what is there revealed cannot properly be enjoyed at any time, unless "the Lord gives us an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear," the consequence is, he that would properly enjoy the gospel, must either pray to the Almighty for understanding, or, if his word be the word of truth, he must perish in his folly.

But notwithstanding these facts, all our attempts to pray must be in that order which our faculties and the nature of things will admit. For if any man does not perceive his want of wisdom, or is not persuaded that God "giveth to all men liberally, and upraideth not," how shall he avail himself of such a privilege? Our next obligation is,

III. *An attempt to possess and to preserve what our Lord himself has called a single eye.*

He said, "The light of the body is the eye." He has also said, "If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light."—Mr. Balguy has properly observed, that "the most natural signification of a *single eye*, in relation to the mind, seems to be that purity, integrity, and simplicity of judgment, which consists in being directed and governed solely by evidence;" [such, however, as the nature of the subject will admit,] "without regard had to any other consideration. The sight of the mind is then properly single and undivided, when in the view of any case, or the examination of any question, it looks at nothing but evidence, and judges accordingly; without being influenced by any other regards or motives whatever.—On the contrary, an *evil eye*, is an eye distempered, distorted, and depraved; and when spoken of the mind, denotes an understanding clouded with prejudices, and a judgment disturbed and disordered by sinister views, and irregular influences." From this explanation of a *single eye*, Mr. Balguy has inferred, "If reason or understanding, which is the eye of the mind, and the light of the soul, be vitiated by prejudices, and blinded by partiality;" [as he might have added is the condition of all men not converted from such corruption;]

"the

“ the consequence is not only darkness instead of light, but darkness to a high degree ; such as fills the mind with errors and absurdities, disorders and confusion.” Thus he introduced his text, when he preached from these words, “ If the light which is within thee be darkness, how great is that darkness ? ” [Balguy’s sermons, vol. I. serm. XI. On the Causes and Consequences of intellectual Darkness.]

A single eye may possibly be the boast of some who never had it ; but they who do not wish to secure that prize, are certainly running at random. Yet where do we see those sacrifices evidently offered up, which may convince us that some men have such a prize steadily in view ? But indeed, what have they gained, in every age, who have been most resolute to get, and, if possible, to keep a *single eye* ? Nay, what suspicions, and what censures have they not drawn on themselves ? Be it so, yet they have gained in this noble pursuit the testimony of a good conscience, and that felicity which party interest cannot bestow, and which popular clamour, with all its rattle, cannot take away. This felicity, whatsoever it may cost me, I would enjoy. In quest of this, unsolicited, I thus write. To what a happy purpose, should the reader by it be inclined to press towards the same mark ! May he at least, remember, without a *single eye*, as here explained, and as extended to denote a benevolent disposition, scripture must
be

be perverted ; and, may he not forget that the final consequence of such folly will be confusion !

If, indeed, a man could be found who has not any suspicion of his own ignorance, nor any conception of what is called a *single eye*, it is not easy to say what would be the duty of such a man ; for one might almost as well talk of the duty of an *oyster*. It is not possible that any duty can be performed by us, unless we are willing to discharge it ; but to will, is to determine ; and to determine is to perceive, and to prefer. That man, therefore, who is without perception, is in a most deplorable situation ; existing, if he exists at all, without envy, and without excellence. For such an object we can do nothing more, or better, than to pity him in our hearts, and to remember him compassionately in our prayers.

If one duty does not generate another, we may say, that duties are inseparably connected. For, if it be any man's duty to read the word of God, it must be his duty, as difficulties occur, to pray he may understand it. But without a *single eye*, his understanding must be disordered ; should that however be granted, it must be his duty who is so favoured, to pursue, if it be possible, that path to which it may direct him.

IV. *This attempt, without turning aside either to the right hand, or to the left, is the last obligation proposed to be considered.*

One end of our actions is always our own reasonable satisfaction; and it should be so; for, if our actions, at any time, are justly offensive to ourselves, whom, by such actions, can we expect to please? Light is not imparted to amuse us, or to be concealed, but for use.—“ If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.—Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you.—Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as the children of light.—Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore, let us not sleep as do others: but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep, sleep in the night: and they that be drunken, are drunken in the night. But let us who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation.” Such is the language of the new testament to them who profess to be followers of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But what difficulty, what labour is needful to prevent those evils by which the mind of man

is darkened and depraved! In order to this, in Mr. Balguy's opinion, it is necessary, " That we carefully guard against prejudices of all kinds, and take special care to preserve the light of our minds pure, clear, and uncorrupt. That the eye of the soul be kept *single* and sincere; fixed at all times upon evidence alone, and viewing every object in its own proper light, and genuine colours. That we accustom ourselves to observe and follow invariably the rule of truth; stedfastly purposing to resist every temptation, and to withstand every propension, that may tend to draw us from it. That we neither submit to custom, nor authority, without examining, to the best of our power, the grounds on which they stand, and the reasons brought to support them. That we keep a strict watch on our own inclinations; lest they insinuate into our understandings, and give a wrong turn to our judgments. In fine, that no principle of vanity, no views of interest, be suffered to break in upon our integrity; but that we ever seek the truth in the love thereof, with all simplicity and sincerity of mind. By a careful use of these means, we shall be, in a good measure, fortified both against erroneous judgment, and vicious practice; and the light which God hath given us will not only be maintained, but continually improved. Thus our faculties will have full scope, and be exerted to the greatest advantage. And of how great consequence

consequence this is to us, we cannot be ignorant. All our hopes and all our welfare depend on the *use* of those talents which God has given us:" [or are inseparably connected with it] " If we suffer them to be corrupted and spoiled, the damage must be great, and the loss irreparable. On the other hand, if we employ them wisely and well; our care will turn to the noblest account, and we shall reap the fruits of it for ever. It behoves us then, to be watchful and circumspect in a matter of so great moment; and, to render our *endeavours* the more effectual, to implore the assistance of heaven; that, by the *illumination* of his *Holy Spirit*, God will be pleased to grant us a right judgment in all things; that so we walking in the light of *his truth*, may at length attain to the light of everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

To this exhibition of the leading articles of religious obligation, let us add the following remarks :

I. No man is *obliged* to do any thing who has no *inducement* to perform that action. It does not appear, that the greatest extremity will produce an exception to this fact; taken as we wish to have it understood. Suppose a thousand men on board a man of war; suppose that at midnight and far from shore, their ship took fire; that the flames burst out, that all on board, officers, passengers, and crew, were reduced to such a

dilemma that, in a few minutes, they must be consumed by the increasing flames, or perish in the regardless sea; in such a situation, some would probably be at their wits end, but the question is, whether any one of all the thousand, to avoid being burnt to death, would leap into the ocean, unless, in some respect, that dreadful leap seemed better for him than to abide in the ship?—For my own part, I cannot conceive how a voluntary action can exist without the influence of *inducement*; nor that there is any reason to wish we should ever act without it. For, if we could act without inducement, we might act without motive; but if we could act without motive, we should act without having any determinate end in view; but he who acts to no end, might as well have been inactive. If such freaks must be dignified by the name of actions, surely it will be admitted that conversion is not requisite to produce them; nor can it be denied that religious actions are as distinct from such capricious movements as they are every way superiour.

Should it be said, We are undoubtedly obliged to do many things we are not induced to perform; it may be replied, he that supposes we are, would find himself perplexed if he were to be asked, what things? Inducement is of great extent. We may be induced to act from motives more numerous than most imagine: by fear of offending, by hope of honour, by expectation of advantage

advantage, by delight, or at least by amusement in the action proposed; by a junction of each, or by some supposed consequence which leads us to prefer action to inaction, or this action to that; or by other motives yet unnamed; but when any proposition, or purpose is before us, we always determine as some inducement, or as something seducing affects our mind.—Abraham was induced to offer up Isaac; and, by so doing, he not only gave glory to God, but obtained by faith, a good report.—Achan, on the contrary, was seduced to transgress the divine commandment at the siege of Jericho; and, by so doing, he dishonoured God, and, by his unbelief, brought upon himself reproach and death. He saw with ardent eyes, a tempting object; his ideas and impressions were vivid; his will was instantly moved; God permitted him to resolve, and the forbidden deed was done.—“ Every man is thus tempted, when he is drawn away of his own hearts lust and enticed; then, when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”

II. Our obligations cannot be diminished unless inducement decays; consequently, if they ever are diminished, our degradation and misery must be proportionably increased. Inducement may be diminished two ways: First, when a person has not ground to believe that his character,

or behaviour, can be so pleasing to the Almighty, as once they were. Such was the situation of Adam after he had sinned. Secondly; when we have not a clear perception of the hope set before us in our fallen state. Who will assert that he who has, and who has not a clear perception of the hope set before us in the gospel, are equally induced to serve God? Yet, shall we from hence infer any thing in favour of rebellious angels, or of rebellious man; any thing that would diminish their misery or their shame? Far be it. The premises are very remote from such a conclusion.

If, for the sake of argument, we may rate the obligations of an intelligent, innocent and happy man, at a *thousand*, it is easy to conceive, that this sum is supposed to bear some proportion to the nature and extent of his present felicity, and his capacity to enjoy it; nor is it difficult to conceive that the sum of his obligations may become *greater* as his perceptions are enlarged, and as his felicity is more and more enjoyed; but what should make it *less*, but that which makes him miserable and contemptible? It will be objected, Are not the miserable and the contemptible as much obliged to God as they who are partakers of his grace, or as they who are now in glory? —Let us, if it be possible, understand one another.

We

We admit, God is worthy of praise in the punishment of transgressors and in the chastisement of believers; because, he is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed. We admit, in every continued transgression, they who are punished, or chastised, are left without excuse. But still, we believe that punishment is punishment, and that chastisement is chastisement, in their nature and effects; and we think it cannot be otherwise. "When God hideth his face who can behold him? whether it be done against a nation; or against a man only." In such a situation, whether what is called the hiding of his face be partial, or complete, they from whom God is pleased to withdraw the light of his countenance, cannot have the same perceptions as if they continued to enjoy it.—But such want of perception is owing to their folly.—This may be granted, without admitting that our darkness and distress in *this* world, are always equal to our criminality. Remember Job: We are, without exception, in a state of darkness prior to our conversion, and remain in it till *called* out of darkness into marvellous light: this shows the hand of God to be upon us so as not to be removed by any but himself. Besides; when deliverance comes, and any man is translated by the Father of mercies from the power of darkness into the kingdom of his dear Son, even he who is thus favoured, knows but in part;

after his translation, he may be suffered to walk in obscurity, both as to the dispensations of divine providence, and in reference to his being a subject of that peace which passeth all understanding.—This will not satisfy. A sinner is bound with nothing but the cords of his own iniquity, which he *ought* to snap asunder.—How contrary is such a position to the testimony of God. It declares, that by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; that by one man's offence death reigned; that by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; that Jesus Christ was anointed to preach good tidings to the meek [or to the poor,^a] and sent to bind up the broken hearted; to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound: in short, it assures us, that nothing but the law of the spirit of life, in Christ Jesus, should make us free from the law of sin and death.—To what does all this tend?—To convince us that it is an evil thing and bitter to forsake the Lord; and to prove that in him, from whom we have revolted, is all our help; that the way of our return to God, light to see it, and strength to enjoy it, are so many demonstrations of his favour to disobedient and gain-saying people.

III. No sinner can be saved by a *mere* attention to his duty. This seems to be impossible :
since

^a Luke iv. 18.

since that must be done for us and in us, if ever we are saved, which it cannot be our duty to perform: because if we are saved, we must be bought with a price, and be begotten again to a lively hope; we must also be preserved and renewed daily, in the spirit of our minds, and continually protected from visible and from invisible opposition; each of such a nature as not to be overcome but by divine assistance. Can it be our duty to buy, beget, preserve, renew and protect ourselves? Could we do these things, boasting would not be excluded.

At the end of some prayer, after some recent backsliding, on our attempting to join a church, or under some overwhelming calamity, we are perhaps advocates for the grace of God with becoming zeal, and probably disposed to say, May the Lord alone be exalted! But alas! how soon, and how often, are such words forgotten? —When we were little in our own eyes, it went well with us; what has been the consequence of entertaining a very different opinion of ourselves let our own vexations say.

IV. No sinner can have any ground to expect salvation who is habitually unmindful of his duty. For, there is what may be called a present salvation, as well as that which is to be enjoyed hereafter. But if we are not saved in this world from inattention to the word of God,

and from being inattentive to prayer ; if we are not also saved from an evil eye, and from that crooked course of action to which it would infallibly lead us, what hope can there be of finishing our course with joy, or of ever being at his right hand, where there are pleasures for evermore?

Thus, in a manner undisguised and free, what is supposed to be a *general* idea of our duty, and what are thought to be the *leading* articles of religious obligation, have been distinctly stated : to which, additional remarks have been annexed. What may be the final consequence who is able to foresee? As to *approbation*, may no man approve of any thing in this treatise of which he will ever have just reason to repent! As to *censure*, should it fly abroad without the sanction of that authority it would be criminal in me not to revere, or be multiplied without that kind of argument which only makes it truly keen, it will probably come and go without having any power to disturb my quiet. As to *complaint*, should I learn from it, that any of my real friends are grieved, that, indeed, would grieve me also ; but, unless they could convince me, I have erred from the truth, neither my principles, nor my purpose in interposing in this controversy, will suffer me to be disconsolate. As to *reputation* and *success*, they are where they should be, and will be as great, in spite of all opposition, as,
upon

upon the whole, is best. Few men are more sensible than myself that neither my political sentiments, nor my theological, are such, as, at present, are likely to be very popular: but they have been culled with care, they have been searched and sifted with attention, they have been again and again compared with what seems to be the sense of scripture, they are retained with a good conscience, they are published without the frenzy of a party spirit, or a wish to form one; and therefore, unless the popular taste, within my observation, was more correct, and promiscuous applause more precious than at present I am able to discern, they will be supported as my abilities may admit, till better tenets come within the reach of my understanding. As to such *objections* as Mr. Fuller has formed and published, they will be examined in the following section.

S E C T. III.

OBJECTIONS ANSWERED,

In three Letters to the Rev. Mr. FULLER.

LETTER I.

DEAR SIR,

SHOULD this second part of my treatise fall dead from the press, it will prevent my publishing an abridgment of the first, of the same size and price with this, which is intended, if the present pamphlet should be well received. When I wrote the former part, such inquietudes occurred as do not now exist. It was therefore swelled beyond my first intention, and it is in some places more inaccurate, and in others, more intemperate and unguarded, than I now approve. If a second edition should be published, those errors are intended to be cashiered. That, however, must be left where it is, in the region of possibility; at present my business is to examine your remarks.

As you have reason to expect my observations will be made with such temper as may manifest real respect to you^a, it would give me no pleasure

^a See Page 1.

sure to think you will be disappointed. You will, Sir, distinguish between respect and homage; the first will be granted without regret; the second you will be unwilling to receive. You will also distinguish between respect and flattery; the latter you do not wish me to indulge; and, in polemical epistles, it would appear in an awkward situation. But, treated as I am, and being the older man of the two, it seemed more civil to direct my letters to you, than to make them anonymous, or indeed than to adopt any other mode of answering your objections.

Something like satire and severity may well accord with real respect; how else can we account for such strokes in sacred epistles^b? Should you be of opinion my letters are overcharged with such unwelcome blows, consider, you are not, on this article, the most impartial judge.

In what manner shall I proceed? Shall I examine your letters in the order you have arranged them, or by a careful selection of homogenous matter, shall I first weigh the worth of your complaints, next consider the value of your compliments, then, the nature of your concessions, and lastly, with tenderness, inform you how crude and immature your observations seem? If I knew your wishes they should be gratified. But as they are not known, I must resolve without the benefit of your assistance.

It

^b To the Corinthians and Galatians.

It is, then, my resolution, to take your letters as they lie before me, and to pass over nothing which, in my own apprehension, seems proper to be considered. It is probable our judgments will not go just alike on this business. Much is of importance, in an authour's eye, which few readers are able to discern. You have condescended to examine but little of what I have said in this controversy already; and, to say the truth, I commend you. For as some things were not so deserving of your inspection as could be wished, others you did well to wink at, because it might have been troublesome to have surveyed their meaning.—Enough of preamble. Let us now attend to your *first* letter.

You say, Sir, “ I cannot help observing, that the *spirit* in which Mr. M. has conducted his performance, renders a sober and serious reply to it very difficult.” If by *spirit* you mean “ my personal qualities as a writer, and as a christian,” you have determined, “ that such things do not require an answer.” “ Nobody expects,” you are pleased to say, “ that you should go about to defend your own abilities for writing, or the *spirit* in which you have written.” Am I then bound where you are free?

When I proposed to consider your leading propositions as obscure, inconsistent and erroneous, it was not imagined you would applaud the design. Ingenuous concessions from Mr.
Fuller

Fuller were not expected. But you surprize me when you say, (after throwing together almost all the bad qualities a writer can possess,) "now suppose all this were true, what do nine parts out of ten of it concern the reader?" Could I adopt this strange way of thinking, it would ill become me to write another line.

You do me justice by supposing I was reluctant "to lay hands on a single obscure individual." Permit me again to repeat it, I have no personal quarrel with you; and had I sooner known that what you have written had been so little read, even amongst our own denomination, your repose would not have been disturbed by me. But your errors, apart from your attempt to spread them, are very common: and such is my disposition, if all other things were nearly equal, I had rather oppose *such* errors in one of my own denomination than of any other.

Those gentlemen which you say I have associated with you, are, in my opinion, of different complexions. Has not one of them disapproved of your thirst for disputation, and told you, with his usual benevolence, that he disapproves of your leading sentiments? It is true, he has attempted to defend the association letter from Aulcester, and has justly rebuked an inconsiderate man, who, for some supposed personal allusion to him, dealt out promiscuous censure. But does this worthy friend of mine
approve

approve of that obnoxious paragraph which I have found fault with; or do the association at large, approve of such language? I will not believe it; and if you press me to say why, you shall have my reason. As to the other names you have mentioned, I hope, Sir, I may treat them with due respect, without believing those gentlemen are exempted from mistake: and, may I not be allowed to take notice of such mistakes of theirs as fall in my way, without one wish to do any of them the least injustice? It is not *their* writings, nor is it *yours*, that I am disposed to attack; no such thing; it is nothing more than those *parts* in each, which I think are not to be defended; and I am happy to say, were all those parts expunged, much would remain worthy of notice; which would then be read with greater advantage.

You apprehend, that “some truths would be evident even to the mind of a heathen, were he but the subject of a right spirit.” What a right spirit may be prior to the perception and influence of truth, I cannot divine. But every thing, in some men’s opinion, (though not in yours,) is now, alas! supposed to be right without regard to truth. The poor sophism of Mr. Pope, is, by many, thought a pretty thing. To hear a poet, or a deist say, “For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight; His can’t be wrong whose life is in the right,” could create no surprise.

prise. But that men who are not poets, and who will not allow us to call them deists, that such men should adopt this language is much to be lamented. May you never listen to that firen song!

The heathens to whom you refer us, without a right Spirit, both saw and felt the force of truth. God shewed it unto them. It was the work of the law written on their hearts. But had they, or could they have, without his word, any light that led them to the hope of salvation? ^a

When you speak “ of God’s requirements as being *in themselves easy* to be complied with,” what can you mean? Are they not, all of them, relative? and must they not be easy, or difficult, in reference to them who endeavour to be obedient? You say, they have “ nothing hard or difficult in them, but what arises from the depravity of our hearts:” and yet you acknowledge such depravity is not to be overcome but by that power which is almighty. Your conclusion that the power of God is necessary to subdue the reign of sin is just; but, when it suits your hypothesis, you seem to leave but little for such energy to effect. Besides; is it true, that there is nothing hard or difficult in God’s requirements, but what arises from the depravity of our hearts? Have you never found when the spirit was willing, the flesh was weak? Never met with obstructions from the corruptions of others, as well as from

^a 1 Cor. ii. 7—11.

from your own? Never been hindered by the devices of Satan? Never wounded by his fiery darts?—The scriptures you have quoted at the beginning of the sixth page, properly expounded, will not answer your purpose. But when their connection, the design of the prophets in each, the period in which their words were uttered, and the situation of the people to whom they spake, are overlooked, they may be pressed to serve purposes you yourself would disapprove.

You seem to think, Sir, it is our duty to have *more* wisdom than is “actually and effectually imparted to us by the Holy Spirit.” May I ask, by *what means?* But instead of granting me such information, you tell me, if it be not so, “then it is no man’s duty to be wiser than he is;” and then, say you, “there could be no reason in that complaint, *O that they were wise!*” Seriously, Mr. Fuller, what would you do if you had it in your power? Would you persuade us, that when Moses predicted what would befall the tribes of Israel in the latter days, because they were resolved to do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger through the work of their hands, that he wished they would make themselves wise? Or do you not rather think his prayer was that they would hear with patience the reproofs of their own inspired prophets, and humbly beseech the Lord to give them

them increasing understanding? Can you conceive that Moses, of all men then living, would have thrown out any sentiment which should have had any tendency to have diminished either the dependence or the devotion of the children of Israel? As to myself, you know, Sir, that if I think no man is obliged to make himself *wiser*, or more *spiritual* than he actually is, I think at the same time, *all* men ought to occupy the powers they possess to the glory of God; you likewise know, I believe there is not any excuse for the slothful, and that boasting is excluded from them who are disposed to improve their talents, to the greatest possible advantage. My reason for this conclusion is, because no mere occupant can possibly be successful in any thing, without that blessing which he can never purchase, nor ever command. Is this, “ the same thing as proving there is no such thing as sin in the world?” But you have probably blushed already that you have drawn such an inference; formed, as you may one day acknowledge, without the least foundation.

The remaining part of your sixth page has been noticed before^c; except what relates to the word *disposition*, which is yet thought proper to be postponed. Far be it from me to contend with you for contention's sake; but if you choose to think so, I can only wish you were better

better employed.—I have re-considered what you have said of “ an assurance of a personal interest in Christ,” and I still think you have indulged a levity on that subject, of which, in your advancing years, you will repent. It is allowed there is “ nothing mean or low in a man’s pursuing his own interest in subordination to the public good ; or his own reputation, in subserviency to God’s glory :” and what could tempt you, my dear Sir, to imagine that I wish to contend for either out of that connection ?

You have said, all that I know, or *can* know, of your reading American writers, is, that you have read and approve of *some* of their sentiments. Yet you are disposed to say, about fourteen years ago, I maintained your present sentiments, without any such restriction. But lest I should be vain by being told you “ received some advantage on the subject now in debate, by hearing me preach upon it,” you add, “ you disliked the violence with which I then maintained my present sentiments, and the supercilious language which I used of those who differed from me ; who you then understood to be GILL and BRINE, or writers of that stamp.” Is it possible, my friend, that even fourteen years ago, I could make use of terms more supercilious, or vulgar, than you have now selected in reference to those judicious and respectable writers ? That I ever treated those worthies, whom I knew and loved while

while

while I was yet young, as you are pleased to represent, cannot be admitted; if it had been so, and they were yet living, I would beg their pardon. Upon the whole, however, my sermon "set you a thinking," and you now believe "I was of use to you." If I was, you must own that good temper in a minister is not essential to your edification; and it looks as if you had presumed that your being in a good temper was not essential to my instruction.

My sermon on Rom. x. 3. "entitled the Rock of Offence the Sinners last and only Refuge, which ascribes men's non-submission to the righteousness of God, to *voluntary ignorance, prejudice, pride, and self-righteousness*, appeared to you to carry in it considerable evidence in favour of those principles concerning the truth of which, [when you read that sermon] you then hesitated." If Sir, you then hesitated, whether Jesus Christ could be a Rock of Offence to any man but from such depravity of mind, I am sorry for it, and thank God that I was, as you are pleased to inform me, instrumental in your conversion to a sounder way of thinking: but if you would infer from any thing I have said, that Christ *should* be our only refuge without effectual calling, and affirm, that he *ought* to be enjoyed both as our Refuge and our Rest, previous to the beginning of that good work which is of the special grace of God, permit

mit me to say, the inference and affirmation are entirely your own ; nor will you be envied by me either the credit, or the consequence of such a conclusion.

You ask, Sir, Whether I have not “ derived instruction from the works of men, as well as my neighbours.” When you are next in town pay me a visit, and you shall see my study ; from which you will probably conclude, if I have not gained some advantage, it must be owing to my want of capacity, or to my want of prudence.

That the writings of Mr. J. Edwards are *honoured* by my “ warmest recommendation,” is a remark descriptive of your politeness. No, Sir, the writings of that great and good man, stand in no need of my applause. You do me too much honour to suppose it possible. But I still think a judicious abridgment of his treatise on Religious Affections is much wanted ; nor do I recollect any work of his, which would not be much the better if it were well abridged. The style of Mr. Edwards is frequently coarse, and often quaint ; his manner is tedious ; and, though a great man, he is occasionally trifling ; his sentiments are sometimes difficult to be understood, and sometimes not worth understanding ; but his writings, when pruned of every thing useless and unpleasing, would still contain so much of piety and argument, as in the same compass are seldom to be met with, even in works of merit.

You

You admit, I have discovered “ many apparent inconsistencies ” in your treatise ; and you allow, there are “ many opposite things asserted ” in that performance ; but you seem to comfort yourself with plebeian consolation. If you have been incongruous, I have been absurd. But suppose I was every way as inconsistent as Mr. Fuller, what would you, or your reader, gain by a proof of that assertion ? To support your censure, my sermon on Rom. x. 3. is again quoted ; but the impropriety of your *inference* from it, has already been exposed.

If, in the course of seventeen, or eighteen years, any of my religious sentiments have been changed, you seem to think my *integrity* is at stake for want of “ honest acknowledgment, and for not answering my *own* arguments.” Permit me, Sir, to say, that for a course of *thirty* years, few people can be mentioned, who have read and thought for themselves, whose theological sentiments have altered less than my own. About that distance from the present time, my change of sentiments was great in my own eyes, and in the judgment of better judges. They glorified God in me ; believing that I had obtained mercy : nor are you disposed to assert, they were deceived. Since that period, I have not been without variegated temptations, nor always unaffected with them, or unhurt by them ; far from it ; but the
leading

leading articles of my creed have continued with me to this hour; in which, by every conflict, I have been in the issue more and more confirmed.

It seems, my friend, the more uncivil in you to hunt after the appearance of any thing inconsistent in my writings as far back as the year 1763, in the first juvenile production that fell from my pen, since in writing to you on the same subject, you were told, that the charge of your being inconsistent would be entirely confined to your *treatise*, and that I thought it would be very unfair to search for any thing of a *prior* date. For this resolution, the following reason was given; namely, that the *last* pamphlet is always supposed to contain the *present* judgment of him who wrote it. In this respect, I observed, it was like a man's *last* will, which should ever be so interpreted, as if he had never made any other^d. In another place, you were informed, my ideas of the excellence of God were not diminished since I *ceased* to talk of that subject as you are now disposed to talk^e. Overlooking these remarks and concessions, you still say, If my sentiments are altered, why did I not honestly acknowledge it? I think, Sir, that has been done, as much as the case demands. But you wish me, it seems, to be more explicit. I will, because it is not my design to withhold any

^d Part I. Page 39, 40. ^e Part I. Page 80.

any thing from you which may give you satisfaction.

On my first acquaintance with religion, I was sufficiently calvinistical. But as my thirst for reading, and addiction to thinking continued, they were too frequently indulged without discretion. Early in life, I learned that the antient Romans gained much by suffering their enemies to instruct them in the art of war; by their adopting such measures, building such vessels, and making use of such weapons, as they thought were better than their own. Their maxim seemed noble; on the strength of it, I resolved to learn of every body; but alas! not having judgment and prudence equal to my zeal, shadows were sometimes overvalued, and sometimes such whims embraced, as a riper understanding induced me to renounce.

While I lived in Leicestershire, Mr. Jonathan Edwards was mentioned to me as an oracle; and it was my lot to read him with that want of caution which is too common to persons in such a situation. The effect of such folly was soon felt. Facts now began to be my favourite study; with them, I soon saw Mr. Edwards's notion of disinterested love would not agree; nor was it long before it seemed to be as inconsistent with the doctrines of grace. Grown more cautious by reflection, Mr. Edwards was read with greater care; the consequence was, my raptures were

D

diminished,

diminished, but real respect for his writings remained; nor is it yet destroyed.

With men and books my errors have been much the same. Ever eager to read both, passion too frequently got the start of prudence; but I have been severely taxed for that folly. On removing to town, my change of situation was considerable. In the country, surrounded with *Arminians*, many of them serious; in town, surrounded with *Calvinists*, some of them not so serious as might have been expected. Being a stranger to a trimming temper, what seemed reprehensible was opposed by me with as much sincerity as if I had yet been in a village; and probably, with as much want of patience. This ill directed zeal, however well intended, issued in a separation. The separatists having left us, we found ourselves, as a church, in peace. That peace has now been enjoyed for thirteen years; and it has opened a door to some improvements, and to many useful reflections. Among the latter, thoughts on a misguided zeal to urge men to the practice of piety, in the manner you have attempted, have often been indulged. Both my own mistakes, and the mistakes of some who are of reputation, gave me ample occasion to multiply such reflections. The cause of legal violence, the consequence and the cure, were often thought of before your treatise was written; since that period, you may well imagine such

such trains of thought have been rather multiplied than diminished.

After all, it would be a great addition to my happiness to possess more correct ideas of men and things, and to be able to divulge them with greater propriety. My controversy with you, before it closes, promises to be the occasion, in some degree, of such advantage. Cheered with such a hope, every concession, which a good conscience does not prohibit, as far as my faults are perceived, I am willing to make; and more than this, you cannot wish to extort from

Your respectful humble servant,

John Martin.

Windmill Street, Tottenham Court Road,

July 14th, 1789.

LETTER II.

DEAR SIR,

YOU inform your anonymous friend, you “knew a man, that every body around him reckoned to be very *proud*.” Probably, Sir, you knew a church too, which was anxious, at that very time, to procure this proud man to be their *pastor*. Ask your worthy friends, (by whose favours your manners have been altered,) whether if I had consented to their respectful request they were not resolved to confer upon me that honour. You must confess they who wished me to form that relation saw some commendable qualities in Mr. Martin; nor can he forget the friendship, or the fellowship of those “around him,” while he lived in the country. When, indeed, he came to London, the case was altered. Let me not be so wicked as to say why. If you choose, when you are in a good humour, to guess at the ground of the alteration, it is probable your guesses will be worthy notice.

I am sorry an argument of great distinction, and tending to bring the matter in dispute between us to some issue, should have been overlooked. Thus you state it: “Every man ought to be Christ’s *friend*, or his *enemy*, or to stand neuter, and be *neither*.” This argument, you thus support:

port : “ To suppose the *first*, is to grant all that is pleaded for ; to suppose the *second*, is too gross to need a refutation ; if then neither of these will satisfy, it must fall upon the *third*, but this our Lord declares to be an *impossibility* ; *He that is not with me is against me.*”

On this dreadful dilemma, the following remarks are at your service :

I. When “ to be, or not to be,” is the important question, it seems easy, in common, to understand what is intended ; because it evidently relates to some action to be done by him who asks it, though he is yet unresolved. But you say, “ Whether it is the duty of men to *make themselves* good men or not, is not the question ; such language, or such ideas,” you add, “ never proceeded from my pen. The thing” you say, “ which I affirm, and which he denies, is, that it is the duty of a bad man to BE a good man.” But what this BE can *be*, when it is so stated, I honestly own, I am unable to conceive.

II. To say, “ every man ought to *be* Christ’s friend or enemy,” seems to be an awkward saying ; unless you were speaking of such men as were *neither* ; but that, you say is impossible. To ask whether he who *is* an enemy, ought to *become* an enemy, is throwing your *ought* into a disgraceful situation. The question should stand thus ; *Being* enemies to the empire of Jesus Christ, by

hereditary depravity, and by wicked works, *how* may such enemies be made his friends? But from this question you shrink as if you saw your danger.

III. To support your assertion, that it is impossible for any man to be in a *neutral* situation, you quote these words of our Lord, "He that is not with me, is against me." But however impossible it may be for any man to be *neither* the friend, nor enemy of Jesus Christ, you will not say it is impossible for a man to be in *doubt* whether he is for him, or against him. But it is your manner to argue from that which is not evident, as if it were out of dispute. Were you not so fond of abstract propositions, incautiously stated, but more contented with that junction of ideas the scriptures teach, neither you, nor any of your friends, would be loofers by such an alteration.—As to the text you have quoted, many Commentators have thought Satan was chiefly intended. He is emphatically, the adversary of Jesus Christ; and, the blasphemy of the Pharisees who said, "This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils," was, by our Lord's answer properly exposed. If you would extend the interpretation, remember, to be with Christ is to be on his side, in a manner that denotes *conversion*; but conversion always is by the Spirit of God; it is his

his work and his glory. " If," said our Lord, " I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, *then* the kingdom of God is come unto you." But if this kingdom cannot approach *towards us* without " the Spirit of God," can it be *in us* without the efficacy of his power, and the influence of his love? Nay, suppose it thus to be commenced, we may affirm, unless his gracious operations are continued, those who were set among princes, would sink down again to the dust and dunghill, and die in a state of degradation.—Such are my remarks on that argument which you say, you had " urged pretty much ;" whether you will continue to urge it " pretty much," must be left to your discretion.

Your notion " of a perfect *future* conformity to God's law," let me entreat you to reconsider. If the moral law requires personal and perpetual obedience, without allowing or forgiving one offence, then, whoever has once offended under that law, should renounce the idea of his *perfect* future conformity to it. Every continued violation of the moral law is without excuse, and is an increase of that which is blame worthy ; but after the entrance of sin, nothing in a sinner, here, or in heaven, can be perfect conformity to the moral law. Since Adam sinned, and came short of the glory of God, Christ alone, is the end of the law. The law, in my opinion, is dishonoured by your language ; should you ever think so, you

who are so zealous for the law will thank me for this observation.

But, at present, instead of thanks, possibly, I am again in danger of saying something which you " should not have imagined that any man in his *senses* could have called in question." What can be the cause which calls for such rebuke? Why, I have called in question what you have taken for granted! Dreadful temerity!—Ay, but the thing.—Why the thing which you have taken for granted is this, " that so far as any thing is charged upon men as their sin, so far the contrary must be their duty." But, my dear Sir, how am I to know how far your *so far* extends? What is his name who is able to understand you upon this subject? You add, in your usual manner in talking of me, " he speaks of men's being given up to *vile* affections—allows such affections to be *sinful*; and yet will not allow it to be their duty to possess the contrary!" After an additional exclamation, you ask your anonymous friend, " On what principles, and in what manner is such a *writer* to be reasoned with?" May he be allowed to tell you? Then, good Sir, his request is, that you would reason with him on the principles of christianity, and treat him, if you can afford it, in a manner that is a little more consistent with common civility.

In the evasions you have been constrained to make on figurative expressions, you are to be pitied;
your

your ascribing to me a talking of being rubbed up by the Spirit of God, is forgiven. You must know that phrase was put into the mouth of a Commentator more like yourself than me.—If “some people would have thought that rightly to *use* or *occupy* what we have, would be to seek that which we have not,” their thoughts meet very much with my approbation. But should a sinner, seeking what he has not, say, I *ought* to have that favour which I beg without begging? I ought to be, before I have it, as wise and as holy, as if it, and every other favour, had been a thousand years in my possession?

After much amusement, you ask your dear friend these modest questions: “What does he mean? what is he about? Has he any sentiment upon the subject? Or does he mean barely to oppose?” If this be your language concerning me when you are *amused*, what must be expected should your wrath be kindled?

The subject of natural and moral ability is by design avoided in these letters, because in my *third* part, a section on that subject is promised. Should that section be published, you may have some reason to conclude I am as far from being a *lunatic* as your benevolence towards me will suffer you to wish.—My description of the case of Sampson, and your inference from it, are as near together as Kettering and London.

You say, " Mr. M. has greatly abounded in *misrepresentation*." But this is a charge you are unable to support. Never, you may believe me, never have I yet wilfully mistated your ideas; that could not be done without *design*, and I am not conscious of forming such a purpose. To the best of my understanding when I quoted any thing from your treatise, your ideas were carefully conveyed; your words indeed, have sometimes been omitted, or altered, as the nature of my period required. But this is a liberty every man is allowed, even in making quotations from the word of God. All parties allude to it, take a single verse in the order it stands, or by way of transposition, without rebuke: and, provided this be done without any fraudulent intention, no man forbids the practice.

On the charge of misrepresentation, you assure your friend in your *second* letter, " you will but mention one instance more." But since you again and again renew that charge, if he was not one of your *dear* friends, he might be tempted to suspect, not your veracity, no, that is safe, but your want of memory.—By the way, let me beg your excuse for not always producing the pages of your *Remarks* as I go forward. Such figures do not please all eyes alike. Besides; it is too much for me to believe, that you and I have many readers who will trouble themselves to compare my answer with your *invectives*.

It

It is well if your nameless friend be not wearied with your questions. You say he has a knowledge of my character; and indeed it is needful he should to answer some of your queries. You ask him, to what he can impute my applying what you have written upon humility in the *abstract*, to your *own* humility? Whether this worthy friend will impute it “to ignorance, or malevolence,” let me know when he has settled the business of imputation, and sent you *his* account. In the mean while, hear my *own* account. What I have written on humility, was written with a wish to convince you of the impropriety of talking abstractedly of that grace; since all humility must be the humility of some subject; it was written also with a wish to convince you that what you call your *own* humility, is blended with such incivility and accompanied with such rudeness, that, if it be not corrected, you had better suppress publishing additional thoughts on that remarkable feature of the new man.

It seems you are persuaded, “you ought to be free from prejudice:” yet who would think so from the manner of your writing? Forgive me if I say, that unless both your writing and reading be a little altered, you are more likely to have your prejudices rivetted than subdued.—When our Lord said to his disciples, “O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets

have spoken;" it is evident, he spake of his resurrection from the dead, and of their reluctance to attend to the sense of the prophetic word on that important subject. You either knew this, or you did not; either way, that text had better been omitted, than produced as it now appears.

If I am one of those *Calvinists* who "treat the distinction of inability into natural and moral as a new invention"—"it would be no want of modesty to tell me, that my reading must be very small, or to very little purpose." It may, Sir, be no more want of modesty in *you* to tell me this, than to send me, at second-hand, many other handsome things. When you are a man of *reading* such censure will shock your feelings.

In the middle of the last century, Peter Moulin, Pastor and Professor of Theology at Sedan, in his Defence of the Doctrine of the Reformed Churches, has one chapter on this very subject. This chapter, were it translated, would begin thus: "A new doctrine requires new distinctions. Our innovators, in order to perplex us, introduce a cloven footed distinction. They say, there are two sorts of inability, the one natural, and the other moral." But more of this in its proper place^f. You see, Sir, this Sedan Professor, considered this distinction as a *new one*; and we are not wont to call that old

on

^f Part III. § 6. Yet unpublished.

on theological subjects, which was justly considered as new in the day of Oliver Cromwell. If Mr. Edwards, Mr. Toplady, and Dr. Gill, in contending with *Arminians* availed themselves, in a limited view, and with sobriety, of such a distinction, this is no reason why you should fiddle upon it, like some scraper on a broken violin; who, unwearied with his labour, though our ears are filled with dissonance, scrapes on, as if he was charmed with his uncommon skill.

It seemed of some importance to you, to inform your friend, it were *puerile* to have any dispute with me, whether you were approaching to *Baxterianism*; would it, then, be *manly* in your opponent to attempt to persuade Mr. Fuller that he is a *Calvinist*?

In another of your questions you ask, "Is it so inexcusable a fault to be wanting in what we are not obliged to *have*?" You know, Sir, in my opinion, he that is conscious of any obligation is induced; but to talk of a man's being induced to do nothing; is not very common language; and to say a man is induced to *do*, or to *have* any thing, without any mean of performing the action, or of obtaining the object, is to talk above my comprehension; and probably, above your own.

Was it, my friend, in some rapid flight of yours, you looked down on your present antagonist so much to his mortification? Now I am *proud*,
then

then a *lunatic*; now *foolish*, then *profane*; now *ignorant*, then *malevolent*; now *beneath resentment*, *incapable of blushing*, then *envious* and gaping after academical *emoluments*. You either think so, my dear Sir, or you do not; if you do not, why am I thus aspersed? But if you really think I deserve such appellations, how is it, that of all the opponents you have had, none have been so *amusing* to you as Mr. Martin?

Why, among the rest, do you charge me with being *profane*? Have I, like Esau, for one morsel of meat, sold my birthright? No such thing. But reputation is an end for which I write, and the applause of competent judges *seems* to be the summit of my wishes. Yet, Sir, your conduct shows you cannot bear reproof; and more than once you condescend to appeal to "competent judges:" nay, I am afraid you have stooped so low as to be content with their applause whose judgment is yet too green to make it worth your notice. Hard is my lot indeed. You seem to have procured a patent to say any thing, and to reprehend me severely if I call any thing you say in question. But I have introduced the authority of St. Paul to justify my *folly*. For *this* you charge me with being *profane*. Suffer me, my friend, to say, with what propriety? Though Paul never said to the Athenians, "Now, I praise you brethren;" yet to the Corinthians, he indulged that address. In
another

another part of the same epistle, to the same people, he said, " Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not." May we not infer from such behaviour that if the church at Corinth had been as dead to his praise as the beasts he fought with at Ephesus, or as the Stoics who disputed with him at Athens, he would not have treated them with such marks of respect? He that is dead to prudent praise, is not alive to well supported censure; and he that is dead to both, must be taught, if he be taught at all, as Gideon taught the men at Succoth.—If you please to consult Cruden's Concordance under the word *praise*, both as a noun, and as a verb, you may possibly think better of that motive of action than you are yet willing for certain reasons, *openly* to own.

Why should you imagine I am so *heroic* as to have no dread " of the anger, or resentment of others?" You have been told, if I must be compelled to hear the prolonged tone of well supported censure, I should feel as much as the humane could wish.* But you have overlooked that information. Believe me, Sir, I much dread the displeasure of sensible men, when their good will towards me is as conspicuous as their censure. If you will have it, that *therefore* I am not out of temper at such remarks as yours, you will certainly do yourself an honour by making that observation.

Fond

Fond as you say I am of fame, on whom do I fawn? whose support do I solicit? when do I call myself an ambassadour? when do I profess to be profoundly humble, or eminently holy? when do I dress as a clown, or as a fop, to gain attention? when do I tell stories, or jest, in the pulpit, in hope of pleasing those who love to be tickled, and not to be taught? Yet you know who by such craft have been caressed, and who by such tricks have obtained learned distinctions. From such follies, you are, in part, exempted; may you find grace to renounce the whole; and every thing else which may improperly affect your growing reputation!

That any thing has been hazarded by the questions I have asked^h, or that your interrogationsⁱ will expose me to any danger, has not yet been discerned. These things will not compel me to deny a fact which is not my disgrace, nor by any means peculiar to myself. I confess, it is my wish to undertake nothing which is not of good report; and having engaged, it is my desire to act as being willing to deserve it. Contempt of honest fame is contemptible; indifference to it is injurious; a thirst to enjoy it from our fellow creatures, without, or beyond desert, is madness; to feel this vicious thirst, and to affect we have no wish to be applauded, is something
you

^h Part I. Page 58. ⁱ Remarks. Page 20.

you are perhaps, better able to describe than I am able to depict.

Degrading others is as distant from honest fame, as my heart is from the most distant wish that you should be degraded. Believe me, my friend, your jewels are untouched; you are in no danger of losing any thing by me you should wish to keep. We pair our nails, and cut off other excrescences without regret. Such warts and wens you have indulged too long. Was it not some tumour that wanted amputation, which lead you to conclude I must *swell* with an improper idea of myself, because it was supposed you would not hesitate to say, that your present competitor was above contempt? You often call me your *opponent*; and, on the authority of Johnson, I used the word competitor in that sense. Now, that I should fancy, I was qualified to say *something* in answer to *Mr. Fuller*, which would be above *contempt*, surely, Sir, unless you were somewhat off your guard, you would not have called this in question.—Where I have said my arguments are *formidable*, is not just now recollected; but it is easy to infer, if you have not felt them to be of force, you might have answered them better, and written with less appearance of being angry.—All conclusions that are good, are in my opinion *inevitable*; so that if either I, or you, have formed any good conclusions, they are of that description.

You

You are too indulgent, though not exquisitely polite, when you say of me, "Allow his heart in *one* instance to be better than his system." This, Sir, is what I cannot allow. My system is made up of sentiments; and my heart is no better even in *one* instance, than the truth it has received. What the human heart may be uninfluenced by principles, or better than the principles which it prefers, I cannot understand. But the term *heart* is a favourite; and, like other favourites, too frequently esteemed without understanding. On the contrary, the *head* is a term a little suspected; and, like other suspected things, it is often treated with too much contempt.

In the note at the close of your *second* letter, there is something so like ill-nature, that were you not the good man you are, I should call it by that name; and really, as the matter stands, I do not know by what softer name to call it. That advertisement which is published at the end of the Christian's Peculiar Conflict, was as much applauded by a sensible man as it is condemned by you. It was well intended; and had my progress in writing well, been as conspicuous as my intention was good, it would give me great pleasure to reflect on what is there with too much truth acknowledged. But alas! I have yet written nothing but what a good abridgment would make much better. Should my life be spared, my leisure
admit

admit, and I should fancy my ability equal to the task, I may possibly publish without subscription, an abridgment of all my papers which I deem to be worth preservation.

How dear to you must have been the disposition to find fault with your poor adventurous friend, when you wrote that strange note.—In what manner it is customary for the associated ministers and messengers to revise, alter, and correct their annual letter, the letter from Aulcester, and others beside it, bear witness. Candour, perhaps, has not yet suffered them to be over nice in this business. But, that I may not be thought wanting in kindness to my old friends, let me entreat you to assure them, I have not forgotten the pleasant days which their friendship gilded; nor their wholesome remarks, by which I was, in those days, repeatedly instructed. Mr. Isaac Woodman can never be thought of by me without continued satisfaction; yet, even from him, I dared, in some things, to dissent, and do not repent of that resolution. But his prudence, his peaceful turn, his cheerful cast, his sagacity to perceive what was relatively right, O Fuller! these were gems I admired in that dear man. God grant that I may live to admire as much in you! He is dead, or I would not have said so much: but tell my brethren, who yet, as well as myself, survive him, I love them all; and that I believe it would be to my advantage to love them better.

Let

Let me hear no more of my association letter ; it was written on Election ; a subject as important in my estimation now as then. Assure them, I did not refer to sentiment but to style ; not to what we use to call the " subject matter," but to the manner of its being drawn up, when I put it among my " fugitive pieces." When they know this, as they have never wished to value themselves on so poor an attainment as what is commonly called a good style, they will, at your request, be as cordial with me as ever.

That I am not a competitor with you for fame, may be owing to your renunciation of it as a motive that induced you to write your treatise, and your recent remarks. If, Sir, fame was not your motive, every good judge will think, so far at least, you acted wisely. Till your labours are more replete with learning, manners, critical accumen, and sound divinity, it is said, I may be confident I shall not be *envied* the honour of being your antagonist. But who believes all that is told him? Whether I am, or am not envied the honour of entering the list with you, nothing, if it be possible, shall prevent my being, with due respect,

Your's in our Lord,

John Martin.

*Windmill Street, Tottenham Court Road,
July 22d, 1789.*

L E T T E R III.

DEAR SIR,

I BEGIN to be alarmed, perceiving, now it is too late to alter my plan, that in *one* letter three of yours must be noticed. Indulge me with your best temper on this occasion ; and since you wished me to make this part of my treatise cheaper than the former, bear with the want of *enlarged* attention to your remaining remarks.

Your concessions on the subject of disinterested love, though they are as they are, are accepted for all they are worth. You admit self-love to be implied in our being required to love our neighbours as ourselves ; but you ask, “ Does it follow, that because a pursuit of God’s glory cannot be separated from our best interest, therefore it cannot be distinguished from it ? ” It is of no moment whether it can or not ; since that pursuit and our best interest are so inseparable, that without the former, the latter cannot, in any instance, be at all promoted.

Tutored by you, who can remain destitute of understanding ? You have said, “ you know of no such properties in the Deity in which his creatures have no interest ; ” nay, you have said, “ that *whatever* excellency exists in the nature of God, that excellency *is* engaged in favour of his

his people ;” yet you immediately ask, “ But does it follow, that because, if I am a christian, there is *no* excellency in God but what I *have* an interest in, therefore, such interest is the *only* possible consideration, for which I can or ought to love him ?” If it does not, something which is neither *excellent* nor *interesting*, must be the object of your esteem.

“ In one sense,” you allow, “ it is true you know not what God is in himself.” Shall I presume too much to ask what that *one* sense is ? I am interested in the solution of this question, because you still assert, “ we must necessarily love God for what he is in himself—antecedently to our enjoyment of him.” You ask, “ Do men ever seek a portion in earthly things, without viewing that portion as good and desirable *in it self* ; whether they have it or not ?” One would think, the portion which a man *has*, he need not *seek*. When the cock, (according to the fable) found on a dunghill, a diamond, he said, ‘ Had a lapidary found this treasure, his heart would have been elated ; but for me,’ (continued our prudent cock,) ‘ I should have much rather found a grain of barley !’ We cannot wish to be degraded to the condition of a cock upon a dunghill ; but surely, to prefer that which is relatively of no value to us, to that which is, would be no proof of our good understanding. When foolish and disobedient, we preferred
ashes

ashes to bread, and that which satisfieth not to that which is every way substantial; but how were we called from such delusions? Was it by the tinkling sound of disinterested love, to feast on mental error, or on some abstracted notion, idle as it is abstracted? No; "Eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness;" this was the language which roused our attention, and raised in us a hope of our being made partakers of "the sure mercies of David."

That *you* "can distinguish between the affection which you bear to a man on account of his kindness to you, and that which you feel towards him on account of his general character," it hardly becomes me to contradict. But in each of these views, it is observed your affection towards this man, is said to be "*on account*." On account of what? If you knew his general character to be *cruelty*, would you love him on account of *that*? But must his *kindness* lose its value, because you were a distinguished object of his benevolence? This may discover what some may call *your* humility, but who will think this to be a part of your best understanding?—A good character among men cannot exist in any man, unless he has some capacity, inclination and opportunity to do good; nor can it be perceived and approved, without some advantage to them who enjoy it. When Paul said to Timothy, "Be thou an example of the believers in word,
in

in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity ;" he had the good of believers in view. Believers, therefore, from that period to this, have been thankful for such examples ; have wished they might be multiplied and continued, and have lamented they should be so few in number, and that their lives should be so short. But where would be the good sense of all this, if they derived no *advantage* from such examples ?

My quotation from Mr. Boyle seems to have given you offence. Thus you express your displeasure : " what can be thought of Mr. M.'s ingenuoufness in quoting from Mr. Boyle against the doctrine of disinterested love, when every one who reads his performance, must see that *that* doctrine is there expressly and largely defended ?" Ask a worthy friend of ours and he will tell you. For when he collected the Concessions of so many Pœdobaptists in favour of believer's baptism by immersion, he said such testimony to him, was worth a thousand others.

When you inform me, that " the sum of all the rewards contained in the gospel, is God himself," I give you credit. But how is God himself the reward of any man ? Is he not so by covenant ? By a covenant ordered in all things and sure ? By a covenant containing all our salvation, and all our desire ? To some, " our God is a consuming fire." But to the elect, he is a sun of righteousness, arising with healing in

in his wings. If we have any reward it must be of grace; and that grace is our best interest. That I once said more than became me on disinterested love, has been acknowledged. But you ask, in capitals, “ Did he then think himself a *wiser* man than he does now?”—HE DID.

When a man reads any affecting story with emotion, he cannot examine it with minute attention. But when affection subsides, he may say, what doth it? If he perceives the narrative to be well founded, and judges his emotions to be productive of good effects, he will read it again with closer inspection; but if he thinks it fabulous, and its effects noxious, he throws it aside. On these principles, I have not read Sir Charles Grandison since I was a boy: but on the very same principles, I read daily, some affecting narrative in the word of God.

The charge of *hypocrisy*, of all others, was the least expected. But this affront is easily surmounted; because it will gain no credit.—Every good authour has written when he should have slept. Even Homer nods sometimes. If the Drs. Goodwin, Owen and Gill; if Mr. Charnock and Mr. Brine, have talked of loving God for his own excellence, yet not to answer your purpose. If they have, it is obvious, you take and leave what you please of their writings. Am I bound to take the whole?

When I mentioned having had trials and observations more in number and variety, than some people have yet had opportunities to experience and consider, it is plain I had no person in view who was *older* than myself.—If you wish me to feel what I have not felt at your rebukes, write with caution, correct with care, and postpone your publication till you have very little to hazard by its appearance. But what counsel can be more unwelcome to your ardour? The first notice I received of your rapid Remarks was thus expressed, in a letter to a friend who sells your publications.

“ More trade for the Booksellers! Shortly will be published, Remarks on Mr. Martin’s late performance; entitled Thoughts on the Duty of Man, &c. by Andrew Fuller; price 6d.”

“ About six weeks ago, I set about it. It has been finished about two or three weeks; except copying it out for the press. Of all the opponents I have had, none have been so *amusing* to me as Mr. Martin. It is almost impossible to be out of temper with him. You may mention the above *to whom you please*.”—Who could be terrified with such tidings?

When you had “ *finished*” your Remarks, they were sent to London. To whom? Published as they now appear, one would imagine young men had the revision of your manuscript. If elders were permitted to see it, they seem to have

have treated you as an object unable to bear contradiction; or if they were faithful, you have convinced them you were not to be instructed.— At the close of your pamphlet, is the following advertisement: “ N. B. A reply to Mr. Taylor’s XIII Letters will shortly be published.”— I hope, Sir, your *shortly*, like my *soon*, is not to be understood strictly. Unless you *make haste slowly*, a man of Mr. Taylor’s abilities will compel you to make “ more trade for the Booksellers;” or to speak more properly, to give them additional trouble; for Booksellers would starve by selling such pamphlets as yours and mine.

In the beginning of your fourth letter, though you had promised to the contrary, you again renew the charge of misrepresentation. You now complain, because I have represented you as “ maintaining that it is men’s duty to produce spiritual dispositions, to be born again, to vivify themselves, to make the word effectual to salvation, to convince themselves of sin, and to be the sons of God.” But you suppose, “ all I would abide by is, that these are the just consequences of your principles.” Of this, from the following quotation, without a Comment, let the reader judge. “ Whatever a person *is*, or *does*, in respect to spiritual *dispositions*, and *exercises*, when he is regenerated, we think it no more than

E 2

what

what HE ought to have *been*, and *done*, prior to that period, as well as at the time ^k".

If you have been inconsistent on this subject, you have formed that plea upon it which was expected ^l. However, if you wish it to be known that you do not believe it is "men's duty to produce spiritual dispositions, to be born again, to vivify themselves, to make the word effectual to salvation, to convince themselves of sin, or to be the sons of God;" I am willing to extend your concession as far as I can. But have you considered the consequence? For you may depend upon it, sensible readers will say, "With many a weary step, and many a groan, Up a high hill he heaves a huge round stone; The huge round stone resuming with a bound, Thunders impetuous down and smokes along the ground."

If my reasonings affect any thing, you say, "it is not the duty of believing in Christ, but that of being the subject of spiritual dispositions." Of this subject, I have promised to take some notice ^m; and I venture now to assert, no kind of dispositions can exist in us, without sensations; nor sensations without motion; nor motion without a mover. If a man feels pain in his great toe, he is disposed to pull off his shoe and search for the cause; if he perceives his pain to proceed from a thorn, or from some
internal

^k Treat. P. 131. ^l Part I. P. 103—105. ^m P. 29.

internal disorder, or only from a sharp piece of gravel lodged between his stocking and the part affected, he acts accordingly. When a man is fast asleep, till some internal, or some external sensation affects him, he sleeps on; but when thus disturbed, according to the nature and degree of the sensation, so is he disposed to act. If he finds himself awaked and in health, and perceives it his usual hour of rising, he is perhaps disposed to rise; but if he hears the watchman say, 'Past three o'clock,' it is more probable, he is disposed to sleep a little longer. If when he is determined to get up, such sensations and ideas rush upon his mind as he disapproves, he is disposed to dismiss them; if he succeeds, and a better train of thoughts occur, he is disposed to pursue it till he meets with some obstruction.—Now, Sir, I wish to know, whether what you call spiritual dispositions, holy dispositions, a right temper, a right spirit, a frame of heart, and so forth; *ought* to exist without sensation and perception. If it ought, may we call this strange thing *capacity*? But whence is that? Are any of our religious friends ripe for another revolution of sentiment, and ready to hear it is our *duty* to have both *capacity* and *genius*? Are they willing to be told, if this be not the duty of *all men*, it is difficult to conceive how capacity or genius "can be either necessary or acceptable to God?"

Having told us, " Every sinner is required to love God with all his heart," you infer, " this implies a right spirit ;" and add, " a right spirit, in *this* view, is a duty." In what view? As it is *required*? But are the precepts and promises to be divorced? Are we *ever* required to consider the precepts abstractedly ; to be affected with them, and to act upon them, as if such injunctions alone existed? Were we under law *alone*, we could not be under grace ; but he who is not under grace, is under the dominion of sin. In the empire of Jesus Christ, grace reigns. If so, it takes the lead ; and it is both the cause and conservation of all moral excellence. Yet when I ask which must take the *lead*, the blessing or the duty, you call this an " unmeaning question."

Softly, my dear Sir, softly, I beseech you. " Mr. Martin's *best* friends *detest* these principles—they must always be *detested*. If this be not *antinomianism*, nothing *ever* deserved that name!" What have I done, Rev. Sir, to deserve this holy rancour? Why, I have said, it is not the duty of a bad man to make himself a good man. Indeed, Sir, you glory over me too much ; since you yourself have said, " Whether it be the duty of men to *make themselves* good men, is not the question." You have assured me, " such language, or such ideas, never proceeded from your pen." But, wo worth the day! I have also said, it is not the duty of every good man to make himself

as holy as St. Paul. Yea, and “ there was a time, when Mr. M. himself, considered such notions as not only *dangerous*, but *despicable*.” If the abused reader should consult your proof, what must he think of your candour? In a sermon published in 1776, I have said, “ But to infer that Christ obeyed moral precepts to obtain liberty for us to break them; or that since he has magnified the law and made it honourable, it is of less moment for us to regard it, than if he had not, is highly absurd; nay—such conclusions are as dangerous as they are despicable.” Such were my sentiments; and on this subject, my thoughts are still the same. But what are *yours*?—As to my *best* friends, if they choose to withdraw their friendship from me, unless I profess to believe it is the duty of every good man, however he may be employed, afflicted, tempted, or deserted, to be in every moment of his conflict, nay, while he is asleep, as well as when he is awake, as holy as St. Paul is in heaven; it will only prove that some of my best friends are far more intolerant than I expected. But that I have any friend disposed to treat me in this manner, or who is unable to perceive your intention, is incredible.

“ If a righteous king confer with a number of his rebellious subjects”—What then? Must the God of all grace, speaking to us by a Mediator, model his compassion, and adjust his conduct,

after your description of an earthly king expostulating with his *fellow* men ; so that, if they who are rebels against God, be not instantly willing to come under divine government, the “ conference must immediately break up ? ” You may reply, your similitude does not rest on such a supposition. If it does not, it is useless ; and if it does, it is injurious. Men dead in trespasses and sins, are not subject to the law of God ; neither indeed can be. If such men are saved, they must not only be reasoned with, but converted. But in conversion, God takes away the stony heart out of their flesh, and gives them an heart of flesh. For he speaks to them by that Son who has “ received gifts for men ; yea for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them. ” At such compassion, the converted say, “ Who is a pardoning God like THEE, or who has grace so rich and free ! ”

“ The language of the bible,” you inform me, “ is not, use such and such means to get those dispositions of which we are at present destitute ; but, BE YE HOLY, *for I am holy.* ” — The bible is a book of considerable size ; and the language of it must not be judged of by a few preceptive sentences. The contents of the bible are various, relative and connected. When you are properly attentive to the *whole*, you will not quote the sacred text in a manner so partial and unfair ; nor will you apply that to the unconverted,

converted, which evidently belongs to them who are passed from death to life. Your mistake is as great as if you would form your judgment of the holy anointing oil, from *one* of the principal spices by which that ointment was compounded. Exod. xxx. 22—25.

But if the language of the bible be what you represent it, whose language is this? “ If instead of using exhortations to sinners, *merely* that we may use the *means* which God has *appointed*, we give them to suppose that any work that is truly good, is, in whole, or in *part*, to be effected by, or ascribed to themselves, *then* do we *dishonour* the Spirit of God?” What *these means* are, you teach teachers to pursue; and assure us, “ Nor hath God left off to work by *these means* still.” Was ever any good man so unlike himself?

In my opinion, the following quotation is worth your notice: though neither in it, nor in what I have quoted from Mr. BALGUY, nor from any other AUTHOR, are you to suppose that I approve of every word. “ Vice will never be chased out of the world with invectives; nor virtue advanced to her empire by panegyrics. The most prudent advertency, and the most manly resolution, the most rational love, and the most generous indignation, that ever opinionative moralist could conceive and fortify his breast withal, will never be able to secure a man against

the subtle approaches, or violent assaults of sin. 'Tis only the divine assistance that is our castle and defence, and the vital spring of all our good habits; and whoever terminates his hopes, even of serving and pleasing God, upon the confidence of any other strength than what is derived from God, his hopes are impious and he must miscarry. 'Tis true, that rational arguments are proper, nay, necessary, to excite a man to his duty; which is a rational service, and effected by rational *endeavours*; not by lazy presumptions. But then, this is the point, a man must likewise know, that when he is about his duty, *he* is not *sufficient* for that which he is about; for God hath reserved a partial *agency* to himself; and he does as much command our application to him for this assistance, as he does demand all the rest of our duty:—therefore, he who shall undertake to reason and argue a man into his duty, without insisting on the necessary application to God, does the same thing in resemblance, as if he should cut off the travellers *legs* and provide him with a *staff*.”

Neither presumption nor despair can be nourished by such doctrine; but, “ if it be alledged, that telling sinners it is their duty to *be* of such a temper of mind as they must know they are not, and telling them of *no means* by which they, without possessing any true desire after it, may

become

become of such a temper, must drive them to despair ;” you reply, “ *first*, It is impossible, in the nature of things, for any means or directions to be given, which those who have no direct desire after a right temper of mind, may use in order to obtain such a temper.”—Would you act on this principle if you were requested to be a *mediator* between two contending friends? Would you wait to discover a *direct* desire for reconciliation on both sides, before you interposed, and desist as soon as you saw *direct* desire, on either side, decline? A young man who has no *direct* desire to sit at your feet, may, by some *gossip*, be prejudiced against you ; when, if he did but know half your worth, he might covet that situation. Shall no step be taken to undeceive him?—No, none at all.—Alas! Sir, why such severity?—“ Because the use of a mean always *implies* the existence of a *desire* after the end.”—True ; but what does that desire *imply*? Does it ever exist without a *cause*? without any *perception* of the end desired? Does it produce *itself*? Or, like the drops of dew, hath it a *father*?

Your *second* answer is worthy of the first. “ It is true,” you say, “ such a doctrine as this, *must* drive sinners to despair ; but it is *such* despair as *must* lie at the foundation of *all* well grounded hope.” I hope not ; because this doctrine teaches men to be holy by a *direct* desire of their own ; self-begotten and supported, previous to the use of any mean, and previous to the communication

of any distinguishing blessing. The curse which transgressors have deserved, increasing as sin abounds, I can in some measure, understand. Forgiveness with God, productive of peace and of new-obedience, I both believe and enjoy. But your OUGHTS confuse me; they confuse my betters: to some they may be amusing, but at best they are productive of nothing but contention.

My notion of endeavour is next to be considered; and if you may be trusted, it is "a compromising notion; it has no certain connection with the thing endeavoured after; it is used in opposition to possession; it does not imply any direct inclination, or desire after the things sought; it can have no virtue in it; but on the contrary, it is the essence of hypocrisy. Mr. M.'s endeavours," you say, "are destitute of all true virtue; have nothing in them truly good, or acceptable to God; on the contrary, they are abominable in his sight, as containing the very essence of hypocrisy." You close your account of what you are pleased to call my notion, by saying, "Thus, Mr. M.'s notion of endeavour, either obliges men to be hypocrites, or places him in the same situation as those he censures, and answers the substance of his own objections."

The reader will perceive your *THUS* is very emphatical; and when he considers your zeal for "*perfect* future conformity to the moral law," especially

especially for a practical regard to these precepts, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself:" he will not be astonished at the invincible proof you have given of a right temper, nor be amazed to be a witness of your pacific disposition. But take care of over doing. At the commencement of the preceding Comment, you say, "This is the ground on which he has taken his stand;" and towards the close of your Paraphrase, you make this modest concession; "Truly, I do not know that I have any material objection to comprehending the *whole* of human duty in endeavour." This is humility like your own. But whether *your* objection will be thought so important as you seem to suppose, is not at present, out of doubt.—A concession so singular seems to have been extorted from you. I had said, "if any kind of labour *is* possible, or even *ought* to be possible, to any creature, which is absolutely different from *endeavour*, and short of acting *efficiently*, you were bound to say what it was, if you could." But both your natural and moral ability were unequal to the task. What followed? An ingenuous acknowledgement? Nothing like it. Pushed into a corner; unable to conceal yourself, or to get any further, and afraid to return, you cry out, "Truly, I do not know that I have any material objection to comprehending the *whole* of human duty in *endeavour*." But to save appearances,

ances, you have this *salvo* ; “ though not as explained by Mr. Martin.” What your *better* explanation may produce let us now consider.

“ *First*, endeavour,” according to your Paraphrase, “ includes the utmost exertion of all our natural powers ; but the utmost exertion of all our powers, towards spiritual objects, is spiritual exercise.” Yet of these very powers, you say, “ Seriously, was ever any question made of the *weakness* of the human understanding ? Was it ever denied that our *natural* faculties are *impaired*, as well as our bodies subject to *disease* by the FALL ?” What ! the utmost exertion of our impaired *natural* powers, in a diseased body, on spiritual objects, *spiritual* exercise ? But what other powers can be intended ? None but natural powers have been mentioned in your criticism : besides ; you have expressly denied *moral* ability is a talent which may be *used* or *abused*.^p If I misunderstand you, teach me your meaning ; but if, to evade rebuke, you should say, as no man exerts his natural abilities to the *utmost*, no inferior degree is *spiritual* exercise, that evasion will be treated as it deserves.

Your *second* critical improvement is, that “ Endeavour to perform spiritual actions, and to obtain spiritual blessings, instead of being opposed to the possession of a spiritual disposition, necessarily implies it.” That endeavour implies desire,

fire, desire discernment of the thing desired, and a disposition to seek it, who disputes? But whence that illumination which precedes spiritual desires? Will you say THAT is our duty? Or are you, in a fit of good humour, willing to comprehend the *whole* of human duty, in the dark, and self-righteous endeavours of the human mind? You ask, whether I have not intermeddled in a controversy I do not *understand*;" and you say, "the *weakness* of my understanding, possibly, may never yet have been called in question." These are strokes as impolitic as they are impotent; for if, under this description, I should prove your equal, what will be the consequence? I indeed, shall, have no reason to be elated; but, on reflection, a man of your disposition must feel himself dejected.

Had I been a *booby* you could not have possessed greater confidence of my inability to detect your paraphrastical chicane. Of this, I will produce another instance. I had said, "Human perceptions, and every thing which is built upon *them*, are liable to fluctuation: but in *all* our prayers, unless we verge to *hypocrisy*, we must *rigidly* regard reality: in short, whenever we pray, we must pray as in *truth* we can, let our frame, or state, or the consequence of so doing, be what it may."^a This was your Text. Now for your Comment. "That is, if we have *no desire* after God in our hearts, we are only to take care we *pretend*

to

to none ; and in this way, we may pray with integrity and uprightness." Is it "*in this way*" you amuse yourself ? No, this Comment was not the fruit of your leisure, but of your love to me. Yet on reflection, you seem dissatisfied with your labour. For you say, " I can hardly persuade myself, that Mr. M. really means to plead for such endeavours as these."—This is kind.—" He would not wish however, I dare say, to be an advocate for any other than *sincere* endeavours"—This is very kind.—" But if this is what he pleads for, then *all* the ends to be answered by it are *lost*."—Hey day ! what a change is here ! Sincere or insincere *all is lost* ! You drive the jest too far.—In your levelling humour, which is often uppermost, you assert, " Mr. Martin in pleading for *this* [namely, sincere endeavours] as the duty of man, pleads just as his opponent does, for that which never existed nor ever will." This, Sir, is a full confession that you plead for *impossibilities*. But why am I charged with this folly ? Because I have said in a sermon, published in 1771, " A freedom from condemnation sinners want to obtain, but a life of faith in Christ, and holiness from Christ, they do not so much as desire to enjoy ; nor ever will, until the Lord takes away the heart of stone, and graciously bestows an heart of flesh." Is this pleading ? Is it not an assertion ? Yes, and of a fact I am surprised you should produce ; because it refutes
what

what you would *infer* from that discourse, and is every way unserviceable to your hypothesis.

From such an advocate, what accusations may not be expected? Where have I supposed that endeavour should take the *lead* of desire? On the contrary, have I not said, “ If the desires of men be vicious, let us endeavour to convince them of it, and attempt to raise the reverse; but let us always remember man will never act without *desire*, nor beyond it.” —Every occupant must, in my opinion, have something he can occupy; something which is not the fruit of his occupation, but that which is given him to profit withal. But the distribution of those gifts is sovereign. However, what God has imparted to us, cannot always be known, by mere reflection. Action is frequently essential to evidence; and when it is, our desires and endeavours must be multiplied, if we would know what *lieth in us*, and obtain a settled satisfaction of our present situation. This, Sir, “ is the ground on which I have taken my stand”; and, I cannot but wish you enjoyed the wholesome air of this ample region. It is too keen for the hypocrite to approve; it torments the idle; it terrifies them who build castles in the clouds; but it disposes the most active and sober to be cheerful and humble. You see I do not “ mean, at any rate, to indulge despair”; though I perceive you are resolved, at all events, to conclude your

your correspondence with as little ceremony as you began.

Near the close of your last letter, you observe, " Had Mr. M. but given me leave to speak for myself, I cannot tell how much I might have said in his praise." Not more, I hope, than you *ought*; and if you have suffered yourself to say less, *ought* you not to repent? But if you are of opinion you *ought* to have written just as you have done, confess that word is, in your hands, to yourself injurious, and to your antagonist, an insulting syllable. *Your PRAISE*, it seems, is of some value. Is it so because you are a *competent* judge; or because you are *disinterested* in your decisions?

When the authour of the Night Thoughts called " Fame a bubble;" he strove to grasp at it as much as most men of his profession. It is well known, that he who said—" like thee, *Mæonides!* Or, *Milton!* thee; ah could I reach your strain!" was a disappointed man. But you have not distinguished the language of ambition and chagrin from that of humility and good humour. Were I to form a judgment of you from your five letters alone, what must be the conclusion? But that would be as unfair as it would be to form a judgment of the splendour of the moon while she was eclipsed.

What could seduce you to finish your last letter in a manner so uncivil? Not in a sportive humour,

humour, but grave as when we grudge, you ask your friend, " Seriously, is not Mr. M. *ashamed*? If he is not must not his *best* friends be *ashamed* for him? and not only *ashamed*, but *grieved*, for the idea he gives the world of the motives of those who are engaged in what he calls a serious altercation?" You, and some others, with all your OUGHTS, love, now and then, to *nibble* at a man's *best* friends. Some have felt your NIBBLING; so may I. Such hollow attempts would be insufferable were you less eminent in *moral* worth. Hitherto, I thank God, neither my best friends, nor the baptists, nor dissenters at large, have had just grounds to be *ashamed* of my doctrine, nor of my general conversation. Till they have, your *innuendoes* cannot make me tremble.

What shall I say more to such behaviour? Nothing. We have all of us a time to nod; a time to be vexed; a time when we cannot conceal, nor suppress, our vexation; and we have a time, I trust, in which we are willing to confess our faults one to another, and pray one for another that we may be healed. You wish, it seems, to have " access to me." How am I to believe this, when you have rejected that private correspondence with me, which might have prevented the publication of those letters I have here examined? If, however, you wish to have access, you are always welcome. Grant me a visit. Who knows but after mutual concessions, you
and

and I may form an alliance useful to each other, and pleasing to them who wish us well. Were it not that such men as you have always their admirers who abet their cause without discretion, I should have hope. But if you suffer yourself to be teased or tickled by them, (as you have done already,) I must despair of such an interview. Every man has his favourites; some of them perhaps, of little value; but he is truly great who in argument and judgment has obtained *a single eye*. May the blessing of Levi rest upon you^s! Thus blessed, your letters will command attention; and I shall think myself highly honoured, if, under the influence of that blessing, you will condescend to write a letter to

Your respectful friend,

John Martin.

Windmill Street, Tottenham Court Road,

August 7th, 1789.

^s Deut. xxxiii. 8—11.

P O S T S C R I P T.

WHAT you are pleased to call by this name, might be contained in a single page. Yet within such narrow bounds, what a torrent of complisance ! In your postscript, YOU REPRESENT ME, as “intoxicated with ideas of my own reputation”: Do you mean since I have ventured to dispute with you? As “incapable of respecting the character of other men”: Yet you say, “there are *several* authours whom I still recommend,”^a As “not discovering much of the *christian*”: You only mean as compared with yourself. As “not discovering much of the *gentleman*”: This, of course, most shock your feelings. As “daring”: What a contrast to your meekness! As “swelling with self-importance”: What a foil to your self annihilation! As “throwing out bold dashes of insolence”: This was sufficient to hurt your humility! As “beneath resentment”; But you did not mean to say, beneath *your* resentment. As “not having the vanity to expect it from Mr. Evans”: Why, then, am I “reckoned to be *very* proud”? As “inspired with courage on this principle”: Yet “of the anger, or resentment of others, I am supposed to have no dread.”^b As “thinking

^a Remarks p. 8.^b Remarks p. 18.

I have shewn myself the man": Do you mean the man that was to be of use to you?

What could lead you to wind-up your matters in this manner? Was it to vindicate, or was it to vex Mr. Evans? Or was it done to gratify your *dear* friend? But Mr. Evans must not be blamed for your officious tempers? Some might say, What will he do, if you have been so bold? But I shall only observe, that if Mr. Evans thinks fit to honour me with any notice, he shall find I am not afraid to vindicate what appears to be defensible, nor ashamed to retract any thing which cannot be supported.—The zeal of a pupil (such perhaps as your anonymous friend lately was at Bristol,) may show his attachment to his master; but I beg permission to say, though I have many *brethren*, I have not any other MASTER than JESUS CHRIST. Your ardour for a *Tutor* may throw a veil over your real want of tuition; and could my ignorance be thus concealed, I might be tempted to follow your example.

You think, Sir, "a very small share of candour and common sense would have construed Mr. Evans's words as meaning no more than that men in *general* have the *command* of all the members of the body, and the *use* of all the faculties of the soul." But I will venture to say, that this Comment is partial, and the sense of it indefensible. There are motions in our members over which we have not *command*; and we all of

us possess faculties we are unable to *use* as we could wish. But you first determine what power we *ought* to have, and then fancy we possess it.

Had I room, I would quote at some length, facts we mutually acknowledge, and observe what sort of influence your leading term, applied as you apply it, would introduce. For instance, "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." But it *ought* to be. "Our sufficiency is of God." But it *ought* to be of us. "A man *can* receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven." But he *ought* to receive every thing, and to be every thing, and to do every thing, "prior to that period, as well as at that time!" Such, in my opinion, are your notions. By shew of *right* you are drawn into a gilded fault.

The knowledge which your friend has of my character, made him of "two hard words" to choose the softest. You think my treatment of Mr. Evans was owing to *malevolence*; but he is inclined to impute it to my *ignorance*. Behold, how good, and how pleasant it is, for brethren to play together with the character of a rival brother!

Envy, you imagine, has led me to harp on the subject of *emolument*. But what have I said that can be called *harping* on this subject? Neither my necessities, nor my inclination, at present, induce

induce me to be a *Tutor*. A character, in my opinion, truly honourable when it is well supported. But I am best pleased with communicating my Thoughts from the pulpit, in conversation and from the press. These channels of communication are sufficient for me; and with them I really am contented.

Should you recollect it was my purpose to treat you with real respect, and fancy I have not, I can only say, that when I gave you that expectation I was sincere, and that I have not, in my own judgment, receded from that intention. But when I proposed to carry on this controversy in a becoming temper, though I had read your Remarks, I had not compared them with your quotations. This I did as I went forward with my last section. In this business I met with unexpected provocation; such as, impartially considered, will, I think, acquit me of being wanting of due decorum to Mr. Fuller.



F I N I S.

*Lately published, by Mr. MARTIN, a Sermon
on Romans xii. 15.*

*Sold by the Booksellers mentioned in the Title Page of this
Pamphlet.*